

Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 26 July 2021

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Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)	Councillor Abrishami
Councillor Bely-Summers	Councillor Blackings
Councillor Brown	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Cook	Councillor Corais
Councillor Coyne	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Fry	Councillor Haines
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Landell Mills	Councillor Latif
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Nala-Hartley	Councillor Pegg
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Smowton
Councillor Thomas	Councillor Tidball
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
Councillor Wade	

Apologies:

Councillors Altaf-Khan, Arshad, Aziz, Chapman, Djafari-Marbini, Gant, Hall, Humberstone and Waite sent apologies.

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

18. Declarations of interest

Cllr Brown and Cllr Hayes declared that they would leave the meeting during debate on the motion 'Opposition to the Health and Care Bill' as this affected their employment and hence their disclosable pecuniary interests.

19. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 22 March, 19 May and 23 June 2021 as a true and correct record.

20. Appointment to Committees

Council noted that, subject to the decision at Minute 27, the Labour Group's request to the Monitoring Officer to confirm the re-appointment of:

- Cllr Latif to the Audit and Governance Committee
- Cllr Lygo to the General Purposes Licensing Committee

once the period of 21 days to allow the Independent Group to accept or refuse allocated seats had elapsed (as set out in the report accompanying Minute 28).

The Leader of the Council announced the membership of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group: Cllrs Arshad, Blackings, Brown (Chair) Hayes, Hollingsworth, Rowley, Turner (Vice-Chair).

Cllr Blackings would not attend meetings considering Oxford Direct Services and Cllr Arshad would not attend for meetings considering the other companies.

21. Announcements

The Lord Mayor outlined the many local and city-wide events he had attended online and increasingly in-person, including sporting and community gatherings and celebrations and commemorations of key events

The Deputy Lord Mayor outlined the events he had attended and looked forward to more in-person events as pandemic restrictions were relaxed.

The Sheriff outlined the dangers to the animals on Port Meadow caused by littering, including deaths from eating litter and serious injuries from broken glass. He praised the Port Meadow rangers for their work and encouraged everyone to take care of the meadow.

The Leader of the Council announced that the full list of Member Champions would be released once this was finalised.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

23. Salix decarbonisation grant funding

Council considered the report of the Head of Corporate Strategy submitted to Cabinet on 16 June 2021 seeking a recommendation to full Council for the approval of the loan to Low Carbon Hub to support investment in the Ray Valley Solar Project.

The Cabinet decisions are set out in the minutes of that meeting (included in this agenda).

Cllr Hayes, the Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, 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 loan to Low Carbon Hub of up to £3,385,200 together with the associated capital budget for investment in the in the Ray Valley Solar (RVS) local renewable energy project. The investment will be fully funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant awarded to the council by Salix Finance Ltd a wholly owned Government department funded by the Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Department (BEIS).

24. Financial Outturn report 2020/21 (Integrated Performance Report for Q4)

Council considered the report of the Head of Financial Services submitted to Cabinet on 21 July 2021 setting out the financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2021 (titled Integrated Performance Report for Q4 on that agenda).

The decision of the Cabinet meeting of 21 July 2021 was reported in the Briefing Note.

Cllr Turner, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, 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 2021/22 of £4,984,000, for the grant payment in relation to Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (OGD) schemes. In addition to give a further approval for a capital budget for 2025/26 of £33,000 to fund the remaining grant balance payable for the schemes all of which will be funded by capital grant income from Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (OGD) detailed in paragraph 26 of the report.

25. Decisions taken under Part 9.3 (b) of the Constitution

Council considered the report setting out the decisions made by the Chief Executive using the urgency powers delegated to the Chief Executive in Part 9.3 of the Constitution taken since the last report to Council.

Cllr Brown, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council noted the decision taken.

26. Urgent Key Decisions taken since March 2020

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance submitted to update Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since March 2020.

Cllr Brown, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to note the urgent key decisions taken in cases of special urgency as set out in the report.

27. Review of allocation of seats to political groups

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance setting out a review the allocation of seats to political groups following notification of the formation of a new political group, the Independent Group.

Cllr Brown, the Leader of the Council, 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 revised allocations of seats to political groups as shown in Appendix 1 of the report;
2. **Approve** the following changes to the membership of committees appointed at the Annual Council meeting in accordance with the wishes of political groups in view of the revised allocations: Cllr Latif to come off the Audit and Governance Committee, Cllr Lygo to come off the General Purposes Licensing Committee, and Cllr Smowton to come off the Standards Committee;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance to appoint members to the seats allocated to the Independent Group based on the wishes of that group, or if no nominations are received within 21 days, to appoint members to those seats based on the allocations agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2021 and the wishes of political groups.

28. Proposed amendments to the Constitution

Council considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance setting out recommended amendments to the Council's Constitution to reflect changes to the Council's arrangements for the governance of its companies and joint ventures and a proposed new whistleblowing policy.

Cllr Brown, the Leader of the Council, 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 proposed changes to part 3 and 8 of the Constitution as set out in Appendix 1, and the inclusion of the terms of reference for the Shareholder and

Joint Venture Group as an annex to Part 3 and the Scrutiny Committee's Operating Principles as an annex to Part 8.

2. **Note** the revised programme of meetings for the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group shown in Table 1 of the report;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance to replace the current Whistle Blowing Policy with the new Whistle Blowing Policy in Part 25 of the Constitution, subject to the Audit and Governance Committee approving the new policy;

Note that political groups will be invited to nominate members to form a "Constitution Review Group" to oversee the next annual review of the Council's Constitution.

29. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 14 April 2021 of Cabinet

There were no questions regarding these minutes.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 16 June 2021 of Cabinet

Minute 14 – Housing First programme

Cllr Wade asked for an update on the progress of the procurement of a support service for the Council's Housing First programme.

Cllr Blackings, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless, agreed to circulate the information.

c) Minutes of the meeting Wednesday 21 July 2021 of Cabinet

There were no questions regarding these minutes.

30. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

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

These along with summaries of the 29 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

The meeting broke for 30min at the conclusion of this item, and Cllr Tidball left at that point.

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

Council heard three addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses. Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address by Linda Booker – in support of petition 'stop the so called regeneration of Blackbird Leys'
2. Address by Evelyn Sanderson, Friends of the Fields Iffley - The Value of the Meadows in Iffley Conservation Area as a Community Asset
3. Address by Roger Crisp, Friends of Old Marston – development in Old Marston

32. Health & Wellbeing Board /Health Improvement Board

Cllr Haines left at the start of this item.

Council considered the annual report on the work of the Oxfordshire Wellbeing/ Health Improvement Board submitted by the Head of Corporate Strategy.

Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthier Oxford introduced the report and answered questions.

Council noted the report.

33. Scrutiny Committee update report

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

Councillor Wade moved the report.

Council noted the report.

34. Motions on notice 26 July 2021

Council had before it 7 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed as set out below:

- DSS Discrimination (Cross-party motion: proposer Cllr Thomas, seconder Cllr Jarvis)
- Short term lets (proposer Cllr Diggins, seconder Cllr Hunt)
- East Oxford Low Traffic Neighbourhood (proposer Cllr Wolff, seconder Cllr Miles)

Motion not taken as withdrawn before the meeting:

- Trees for Life (proposer: Cllr Landell-Mills, seconder: Cllr Goddard)

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

- EU Nationals deserves to be treated with respect (proposer Cllr Corais, seconder Cllr Bely-Summers)
- Opposition to the Health and Care Bill (proposer Cllr Jarvis, seconder Cllr Pegg)

Oxford Stadium (proposer Cllr Pegg, seconder Cllr Jarvis)

a) DSS Discrimination (Cross party motion)

Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Jarvis, 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 that:

- The private rented sector (PRS) in Oxford has grown to 49.3% (2020) of homes in the city, one of the largest PRS populations of any housing authority in England;
- Private renters face a host of challenges, including disrepair and lack of affordable rent;
- Tenants in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit also face the prospect of 'DSS discrimination'¹;
- 'No DSS' policies have been found to be unlawful and discriminatory under the Equality Act but are still widespread.

This Council observes that:

- Some landlords and letting agents overtly practice DSS discrimination, e.g. by listing properties as 'no DSS' on websites;
- More often, landlords and letting agents covertly discriminate against benefits claimants, e.g. by using affordability or referencing checks that automatically fail benefit recipients, by systematically favouring non-benefit claimants when assessing tenancy applications, by demanding guarantors when a prospective tenant's income (be it from benefits or employment) is sufficient, etc.;
- Despite alleviating measures such as the council tax reduction scheme, people are struggling financially. More people rely on benefits due to the pandemic, so the effects of DSS discrimination are now particularly widespread.

This Council defends the right to decent housing, and will work to eliminate DSS discrimination from Oxford by asking Cabinet to take the following steps where possible:

- Revise the OCLAS code², adding the following wording: 'you must not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, language, sexuality or any other factor that might place an individual at a disadvantage. *This includes indirect discrimination such as 'no DSS' or related practices, namely refusing to let prospective tenants on housing benefit or universal credit view affordable properties and requiring guarantors in cases where a prospective tenant's income is sufficient*';

¹ this is discrimination against those in receipt of Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) benefits, referencing the previous initials (DSS) of the department

² the [Oxford City Council Landlord accreditation scheme](#)

- Advertise and ensure that the Welfare Reform Team will look out for and follow up on reported cases of discrimination;
- Ensure that duty housing officers are informed about the issue and refer cases to the Welfare Reform Team and independent advice centres;
- Establish a permanent “tenants’ forum”, which should:
 - Be composed of community groups and stakeholders representing tenants, both in private and council housing;
 - Be invited to consult directly with the Housing and Homelessness Panel bi-annually at least and whenever decisions significantly impacting the rental sector come before Council;
- Use official communication and media activities to improve awareness, as well as denouncing discrimination against benefits claimants clearly on the Council website, with a dedicated page detailing ways to recognise DSS discrimination and what actions to take in response.

This Council asks that the Housing and Homelessness Panel consider this issue, monitor actions taken to address it, and make recommendations accordingly.

Council recognises that DSS discrimination is one obstacle among many for those on benefits accessing housing.

Council asks that the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling for benefit levels to be raised and uprated in line with rents so they are realistic for places like Oxford, and for the household benefit cap to be removed.

b) Short term lets

Cllr Diggins, seconded by Cllr Hunt, 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 that an ever increasing number of homes in Oxford are being lost to local families as owners rent the out as short term lets. While numbers are difficult to quantify, we estimate that there are nearly 900 homes in Oxford entirely rented out on short lets for all or most of the year and that these numbers are increasing. This is very worrying in a city that is so reliant on the private rented sector to house its population. About 50% of our local residents live in private rented homes – the highest number in the country.

This Council notes that tourism makes a vital contribution to our local economy and there is no doubt that short lets will have an important part to play as this sector recovers from the effects of the pandemic. However, this loss of valuable family homes puts upward pressure on rents that are already among the most unaffordable in England. This council has deliberately encouraged the development of hotels and guest

houses through our planning policies to support tourism and resist the loss of family housing.

This Council welcomes the recent [letter from the Leader of the Council](#) to the Housing Minister on this subject and joins her call to ask the government to legislate to:

- designate homes used predominantly as short term lets as a separate planning class, allowing local authorities to introduce policies to restrict their numbers and location if appropriate for their local circumstances, and allow enforceable conditions to be applied if necessary;
- allow local authorities to introduce local licensing schemes for short term let properties and landlords, as appropriate, matching local and national HMO and/or PRS schemes;
- ensure that short term lets are subject to the same environmental health, food and fire safety regimes as hotels and guest houses, for consumer protection and to create a level playing field for those businesses;
- allow local authorities to charge short term let properties as commercial businesses for waste collection and so forth (rather than having those services provided for free via domestic waste collection services, when these properties pay no or reduced council tax or business rates).

This Council calls on the Leader to work with other councils and the Local Government Association to campaign to get these aims as part of the government's next Housing Bill and to write to the two local MPs asking for their support.

c) Trees for Life

This motion was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

d) East Oxford Low Traffic Neighbourhood

Cllr Wolff, seconded by Cllr Miles, proposed the original motion as published in the agenda and briefing note. Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Hollingsworth, proposed the amendment as published in the briefing note.

Council debated the motion and amendment. On being put to the vote, the amendment was agreed.

On being put to the vote, the amended motion was then agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following amended motion:

Following consultation on the introduction of East Oxford LTNs, this Council reaffirms the opening paragraph of a 5 October 2020 amended and agreed motion:

"This Council welcomes the public discussions which are taking place in this city about the value of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in encouraging walking and cycling, preventing rat-running, and decreasing air pollution, while also having the positive

effect of opening up residential and shopping streets for local communities, supporting local businesses and boosting community ties. This ongoing discussion is informed by successful LTNs in Waltham Forest, Groeningen in the Netherlands and Ghent in Belgium.”

This Council notes that Oxford’s congestion has long been impossible as our roads frequently came close to gridlock before the pandemic. As the city gradually unlocks, there are more people driving cars and avoiding buses, contributing to rising traffic in the city. In the short-term, the city needs people to return to pre-lockdown levels of bus use to reduce traffic levels, and in the longer-term, to implement Connecting Oxford after further development and significant consultation, to ensure that bus service providers no longer have to run a third more buses than they need to meet timetables because they spend so much time sitting in congestion.

Council recognises that there are citizens for whom the use of powered vehicles is necessary in the course of their employment and because of physical impairment.

Council believes that this modal shift is unlikely to occur unless measures are taken to discourage car use and to make cycling and walking a safe and attractive option for all, and has stated this position most recently in the EV Strategy Cabinet Paper.

This Council notes that, under new leadership, the County Council has taken a new approach.

Council asks the Leader to write to the Leader of the County Council asking for the East Oxford LTN trial to proceed as swiftly as possible as part of a strategic plan and subject to the overriding need to undertake work to address issues raised at the last consultation and respond to them in the new consultation proposed by County Council officers on 22 July and then move on to complete that new consultation.

This Council reiterates its commitment on 5 October 2020 to

- encourage local residents’ groups and elected members in their efforts to engage communities in discussion about LTNs, so that they may be designed to get the main benefits without imposing unreasonable, adverse consequences. Local people know their streets better than anyone else and must be able to shape their communities. Consultation should precede the introduction of LTNs.
- support further studies and consultation to develop LTNs as an evidence-based and democratic approach. The benefits of transportation changes should not be conferred upon one community at the expense of any other.

e) EU Nationals deserves to be treated with respect

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

f) Opposition to the Health and Care Bill

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

g) Oxford Stadium

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

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.00 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 4 October 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.

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To: Council
Date: 26 July 2021
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 where available.
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 a Safer, Healthier Oxford

1. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Upton – Reducing COVID cases

Question

Oxford has become a national COVID hotspot with a rapid rise in cases leading to advice not to leave Oxford.

How is the Council working with health authorities to bring this latest spike under control?

Written Response

Oxford City Council officers have been working hand in hand with the Oxfordshire County Council public health team, CCG and other parts of the Oxfordshire Health system and Government to respond to the sharp spike in COVID cases in the city.

The Leader of Oxford City Council has COVID response as a standing item on the weekly Leaders meeting. She also attends the biweekly countywide CEOs meeting as well as a weekly meeting with universities and the police focusing on response to

1. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Upton – Reducing COVID cases

case levels in the city.

Council officers sit on the Health Protection Board and Oxfordshire Gold meeting, both system wide bodies, which together have made decisions on actions taken and are supported by specialist Cells covering vaccine deployment, testing, Hubs response and communications.

Over the past few weeks, working together the system has:

- Applied for and been granted by the Department of Health & Social Care Enhanced Response Area status for the city – which has enabled additional resources to be targeted.
- Implemented additional testing infrastructure with 5 mobile testing units (MTUs) offering accurate PCR tests, initially for 18-30 year olds and then to all adults.
- Implemented additional pop up vaccination clinics, and the mobile Health on the Move vaccination van in a number of areas of the city targeting harder to reach groups.
- Increased resource in our COVID Secure team, working with the police over the busy evening and weekend periods, particularly during the European Football Championships, to help ensure hospitality businesses and venues remain compliant.
- Significantly increased media and social media communications to ensure awareness of the additional measures.
- Shared advice from the Director of Public Health Oxfordshire to continue to wear a mask in crowded spaces, keep your distance, socialise outdoors, wash your hands regularly and ventilate indoor spaces.

Thanks to the efforts of all those who have taken part in testing and isolating, cases in the city have reduced from 637.6 per 100,000 population on 2 July to around 370 per 100,000 on 13 July. It is hoped that, with the actions being taken, this number will reduce further by the date of the Council Meeting.

2. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Upton – National Referral Mechanism

<p>Question</p> <p>Local authorities are currently under an obligation to refer any suspected victims of modern slavery or human trafficking to the Home Office under the National Referral Mechanism.</p> <p>Is the Council currently complying with this and, if so, what is being done to protect individuals with precarious or undocumented migration status from detention, deportation and the hostile environment policy?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Information for staff on their duties under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is contained in the Council's intranet safeguarding pages. As a First Responder we have a duty to report all under-18s and adults, with their consent. This is done with the intention of protecting the individual from harm, recognising that they are a victim not a criminal. If a person does not give their consent, we still have a Duty to Notify but this can be done without including personal details.</p> <p>Once accepted into the NRM, victims are given 45 days of support whilst their case is being investigated. More details of the process can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Please clarify what the Council is doing to protect these individuals from deportation or detention if they are referred under the National Referral Mechanism?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>As indicated in the written response the Council has a statutory obligation to make these referrals. We recognise these people as victims and we aim to support them. If someone felt they would be at risk as a result of referral we can and do make it anonymous.</p>

Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless

3. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Blackings – Preventing evictions

<p>Question</p> <p>With the ban on bailiff enforced evictions ending on May 31 2021, what is the City Council doing to prevent eviction of tenants in Oxford and support tenants faced with</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>During the pandemic, OCC did the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMS messages and reminder letters were sent out to all council tenants with arrears by the Income Team • Weekly referrals in place for Notice Seeking Possession (NSP) cases to the Welfare Reform
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3. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Blackings – Preventing evictions

eviction?

Team (WRT)

- WRT started identifying council tenants whose arrears rose over 8 weeks and started work with them.
- Council Enforcement Team used social media to post information with advice for tenants facing illegal evictions and harassment.

In addition, and in preparation for the eviction ban, a Homelessness Prevention Task Force has been established and the following activity is being undertaken :

- A review of our Private Rented Sector (PRS) access schemes, to support rehousing homeless households
- Enhanced tenancy sustainment for PRS tenants, including welfare support (Universal Credit payments) and appropriate use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)
- Mediation between landlord and tenant
- Better coordination between teams to support homelessness prevention, such as between the Tenancy Relations Officer and Housing Needs
- Review of the Duty to Refer and Advice Case offer the Council delivers to those at risk of homelessness
- Housing advice surgery at County Court and improved links with advice centres
- Trialling discounts with PRS landlord for Property licensing (HMO licencing and Selective licencing).
- Better intelligence to target prevention in PRS (stakeholders and data)
- Alignment with the developing Locality Hub model
- Continued very generous grant support to Oxford's advice centres who provide additional independent advice on housing and other issues to local residents

4. From Councillor Smowton to Councillor Blackings – Empty properties

Question

When will Latimer House, the block of maisonettes built alongside Beech House but which have languished empty ever since, be brought into use?

Written Response

The flats have had a new owner since May 2021 who is keen to get them occupied. Flats 2A, 2B and 2C are due to be occupied in August with Flat 2D already occupied.

5. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Blackings – Housing First

Question

The Housing First initiative, which the City supports, gives homeless people homes before trying to tackle any addiction or mental health issues. Will the Cabinet Member write to the Housing Secretary and the Chancellor in support of charities calling for an extension of the three regional Housing First pilot schemes, being successfully trialled around the country?

Written Response

Housing First is a homelessness intervention aimed at people with multiple and complex needs, particularly people who are sleeping rough. In a Housing First model, access to permanent housing is recognised as the starting point to help tackle a person's non-housing needs. This is in contrast to other housing models which have permanent housing as the last step in a journey with non-housing needs being addressed first.

In 2018 the government announce three Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City region and the West Midlands. Initial funding was for three years but this has been extended until 2023. Since the pilots were established, many local authorities have established their own Housing First projects utilising other government funding for homelessness. In 2020 there were 87 schemes operating.

There has been much learning from both the three pilots, and other schemes which have been established subsequently. Two critical areas of learning have been in relation to the ability to secure housing and the need for longer term funding. These are important as two of the key principles of Housing First are that the housing offer is permanent, and that support will continue for as long as it is required.

Two thirds of the 87 schemes in operation last year were funded by the Rough Sleeping Initiative which provides funding on an annual basis. The funding that the Council is using for its own Housing First scheme does not allow us to issue permanent fixed term tenancies.

We urge the government to simplify funding for homelessness to local government, creating a single, longer term fund into which LA's can bid for the projects that will meet their needs, and to be trusted to manage them in the way they see fit and I agree to include this in a letter to the Housing Minister.

5. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Blackings – Housing First

<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member write to the Housing Secretary and the Chancellor in support of charities calling for an extension of the three regional Housing First pilot schemes, being successfully trialled around the country?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>I will be writing to the ministers and will share the response with members.</p>
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Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services

No questions

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism

6. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Clarkson – Waterways liaison work

<p>Question</p> <p>Until fairly recently the City Council had a Waterways Officer, who left our service at the beginning of the year. The last year especially has revealed how important our waterways are to the city's life.</p> <p>What steps have been taken to resource and integrate the work of the multiple stakeholders (both external and internal to the Council) in order to continue the excellent work which he established?</p> <p>Will a new post with this responsibility be established?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>A new Waterways Coordinator is now in post working as part of the Green and Blue Spaces Development Team. He has already begun cross agency working with the EA and CaRT, and with the group involved in the Bathing Water Status application. However, his initial priority will be to address a number of outstanding health and safety concerns around the council's own waterway assets. The risks associated with these assets, most notably the former river bathing areas, have been increased by the upsurge in interest towards wild swimming.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Are you able to name the officer at this time?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>Yes – a new officer, Michael Wood, is already in post.</p>

Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; Deputy Leader of the Council

7. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Turner – Crescent Road kick about area	
Question Can I ask: what is the situation with the kick about area on Crescent Road near Crescent Halls? Our previous correspondent suggested it was sold. Is it sold or for sale?	Written Response Oxford Brookes have been interested in purchasing the property, but a sale has not yet been completed. If Oxford Brookes decides not to progress, we will need to consider other options.
Supplementary question This has been going on for so long can you if they are still interested and what will be the next step.	Verbal response Yes this has been going on for a very long time. Officers are following up with Brookes University. Obviously this has been impacted by the pandemic. I will ask the officers to keep the ward councillors informed of progress.

8. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Turner – Implications of Subsidy Control Bill	
Question According to a 30th June Report by Simon Jack (BBC Business Editor), the government is introducing a Subsidy Control Bill intended to enable councils and government to provide financial support to businesses without the former restrictions of the European Union rules on state aid. Has Oxford City Council been consulted about this, and does the Cabinet member think it	Written Response The subsidy control bill is set to replace the current EU-wide state aid rules, following Brexit. The current state aid rules aim to prevent any state spending (government subsidy) that potentially distorts trade between and within member states. This rule also extends to local authorities. There are exceptions to the current rules where aid is allowable, for instance regional training, subsidies for SME's and public infrastructure. In addition a 'de minimis' level allows aid worth less than 200,000 euros (£175,000) over three years to be exempt. The government has said the new bill would allow it to be more agile, targeted and timely in its interventions with businesses. The UK has historically extended far less government support to private business than its EU counterparts in France and Germany and officials have previously said they do not expect the overall level of state aid to

8. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Turner – Implications of Subsidy Control Bill

might have implications for Oxfordshire?

increase significantly. The government said it will judge cases for support on whether they deliver good value for money and help other government policy objectives.

However, there are unresolved legal questions about the Bill, it will no doubt be the subject of debate with the EU, and I am concerned that as such it sows seeds of uncertainty at a time when that is unhelpful to businesses.

One particular area of relevance to the City Council is Clause 3(2) of the Bill. This states that financial assistance will not be deemed to confer an economic advantage unless it is provided on terms that are more favourable to the enterprise that might reasonably have been expected to be available on the market to the enterprise. This is effectively the preservation of the market economy operator principle (“MEOP”) and is similar to the existing EU state aid rules. This means that where public authorities lend at market rate then they should not be providing a prohibited subsidy and therefore protecting the principle that favours one entity over and above another.

State aid is periodically a consideration which the Council has had the need to have regard to in a number of areas. In recent times government COVID related business grants administered by the Council have only been paid to business who have confirmed that they have received no other government grants which may lead them to exceed the 200,000 euro threshold. Additionally proposals to make loans to organisations such as Low Carbon Hub, the Council wholly owned companies and the council joint venture, Oxwed, have all needed to have regard to be provided at a commercial rate of interest in order to not distort the market.

It may be that in future there will be more flexibility than the current ‘state aid’ rules allow but the Bill has a number of stages to go through Parliament before it becomes law and there is the possibility of legal challenge, so it is too soon to draw implications for Oxford and Oxfordshire. In discussing this topic, I should also state I am very concerned about the effectiveness of public spending: there are many instances in recent times where government funds appear to have been distributed on the basis of narrow party political considerations, and this Bill has the potential to make that worse.

8. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Turner – Implications of Subsidy Control Bill	
Supplementary question Will the Council be monitoring whether the government will give us more flexibility?	Verbal response Yes we will maintain a watching brief.

9. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Turner – City Centre Homes	
Question What work is the City Council currently doing or proposing to undertake to review its city centre property portfolio with the express view to converting some of the office and retail space into affordable rental accommodation for Oxford residents?	Written Response The Council owns a significant amount of commercial property in the city centre. However, the majority of its assets are let to 3rd party tenants and therefore the Council is unable to consider conversion to residential or other use unless the building becomes unlet (usually by tenants not renewing leases). Moreover, there is a currently a low void rate in Council stock at present (3 units in the city centre). This implies that at this point in time, our tenants are, by and large, still able to trade, supporting the many local people they employ. This should also give some confidence that, over the medium term, securing a good income from our commercial properties to deliver core services is still likely to be achievable. We will of course keep void levels and income projections under review. Where we have vacant buildings (or potentially vacant) we will consider residential conversion as part of the options process, although with the Council's city centre assets being predominantly retail, many will not be suitable for conversion, and we also need to be mindful of the need to ensure a vibrant, diverse and active city centre as well as the need to ensure that housing that we deliver is of a high standard and fit for purpose.
Supplementary question The response is at variance with other views expressed elsewhere and is there likely to be a more strategic approach?	Verbal response It is important for the Council position to be based on the facts and the position re. our own property portfolio. We will maintain a watching brief and take a strategic response where appropriate.

10. From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – Food delivery by bike	
<p>Question</p> <p>There has been a recent increase in the number of mopeds delivering takeaway food in Oxford.</p> <p>What steps is the council taking to incentivise food delivery drivers and the license food premises for whom they deliver, to use manual or e-bikes rather than polluting mopeds for food delivery?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There are presently no City Council incentives for the conversion of petrol to electric mopeds. Details of the Council's approach to electric vehicles that will help us reach our net zero emissions target by 2040, can be found in the Electric Vehicle Strategy set for discussion at the 21 July Cabinet. However, I have written directly to online food delivery companies operating in Oxford to request an update on their strategies for reducing transportation emissions generally and specifically in the city. There are an encouraging number of deliveries made by pedal and cargo bike and we welcome this.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Does the Council commit to, or encourage, the tracking of data on the proportion of food delivery made by bike or ebike delivery from these food delivery licence holders? Is the Council willing to commit to explicit guidance encouraging the use of ebike / bike food delivery?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>Yes we have regular conversations with traders and would aim to get that information as part of our regular conversations with them rather than as a bespoke consultation.</p>

11. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Manzil Way electric taxi charging points	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can the electric taxi charging points on Manzil Way be used by others?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The T-GULO project is providing rapid chargers to enable the EV transition of the Oxford Hackney and Private Hire trade to play their part in developing the Zero Emission Zone. The intent is to reduce carbon emissions which contribute to climate change and improving air quality for residents.</p> <p>Rapid chargers are able to fully charge an electric vehicle in well under an hour, and are critical for high mileage users like e-taxi drivers.</p> <p>T-GULO Phase 1 saw four rapid charging sockets installed in Manzil Way Gardens in 2019. As announced on 25 June, Oxford</p>

11. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Manzil Way electric taxi charging points

City Council will be installing new six rapid electric vehicle chargers and 12 charging bays across the city, aiming to support Private Hire, Hackney Carriage electric taxi drivers, and local residents

Two of the four bays in Manzil Way Gardens and one of the new bays will be opened for public use in August. This is a temporary arrangement, and will be reviewed every six months, and the bays turned back into e-taxi only once there are more electric taxis in the city.

Once installed, all 16 charging points are capable of delivering close to 800 half hour charging sessions throughout each day.

12. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – E-vehicle charging point strategy

Question

With regard to the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy, what is the current thinking regarding charging where there is a lack of off-road charging opportunities (policy EV16)?

Written Response

Electric cars are without doubt key to getting carbon emissions down and cleaning our air and the Council wants to make it easier for citizens to drive an electric vehicle. We want charging points in neighbourhoods currently left behind by the market, which tends to put chargers in areas of high demand.

As the Councillor will be aware, the City Council Cabinet will be asked on 21 July to approve the commissioning of Oxford City Council's EV Strategy, which will set out the strategic framework for the delivery of EV infrastructure in line with the city's 2040 net zero carbon target, and notes an update provided on Oxford City Council's EV Programme.

When completed in March 2022, the EV strategy will seek to address how the city can best respond to the rapidly rising demand for additional charging capacity. This is particularly important as around 40% of Oxford residents don't have access to off-street parking overnight. The EV Strategy will look at the rapidly changing technology and the increasing number of delivery models for implementing charging infrastructure.

In particular, we want to explore whether the Council could directly deliver EV chargers on our land through our wholly-owned company ODS, ensuring that those who need to drive do so in zero-emitting vehicles

The EV strategy will examine ways to build inclusivity and fairness around access to charging. This will be needed if there is to be equity in the take up of electric

12. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – E-vehicle charging point strategy

vehicles, whose upfront costs, but not lifetime costs, are currently more expensive than fossil-fuel powered vehicles. Currently, EV Charge Point Operators (CPOs) seek to place chargers only in areas of high demand. Without some level of intervention, this would risk leaving significant areas of the city significantly underserved.

Policy EV16 sits within the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy developed by Oxfordshire County Council with input by Oxford City Council officers and the portfolio holder.

13. From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – ZEZ pilot delays

Question

On Thursday 8 July the City Council issued a statement which began "The Oxford Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) pilot will be launched later this year following the resolution of unforeseen technical issues", without saying what those issues are, how they will be resolved, what are the implications for budget, what the revised timescales are and how confident we should be about the statement that the project "will" be launched later this year.

Opposition members of this council have asked the Cabinet on a number of occasions for information about how the proposed Zone will be enforced, but without receiving an answer.

Will the Cabinet member inform Council

Written Response

Oxford City Council did not put out the statement on our own, the statement was issued jointly with the County Council as proposals for the ZEZ have been jointly developed by both Councils.

The technical issues referenced in the joint statement regarding a delay to the ZEZ Pilot start date relate to the back office IT system through which vehicle users will apply for exemptions and discounts from the ZEZ charges. The system is being improved to provide greater clarity for users. A secondary issue that is being addressed relates to developing a suitable bespoke and automated vehicle emissions checker. The improvements are being resolved through ongoing discussion with the system provider. The timescale for these improvements is being resolved through these discussions and we expect to have more clarity on timescale shortly.

The Oxford ZEZ is the first of its kind in the UK. The systems and processes required for the ZEZ Pilot have never previously been used in Oxfordshire. This is partly why the scheme is being introduced as a Pilot before being rolled out to a larger area.

As [announced in January 2020](#) and outlined in subsequent consultations in March and November 2020 as well as in the reports to the city and county council's Cabinets in March 2021, the ZEZ will be enforced in the same way as the London LEZ and ULEZ and the Clean Air Zones (CAZ) schemes in other UK cities (although we operate a tighter emissions standard)– using a local road user charging scheme. The latest information about how

13. From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – ZEZ pilot delays

<p>what the issues are, how and when they will be resolved, and how the proposed Zone will be enforced?</p>	<p>the scheme will work is on the county council's website.</p> <p>In the 31 months between July 2018 to January 2021, opposition members have submitted 29 questions about the Zero Emission Zone at 8 meetings of Full Council (although, actually, this number rises by 15 as some questions were in fact multiple questions) and asked 11 supplementary verbal questions on the same. In total I have been asked 55 questions about the ZEZ over this timeframe by the opposition. Of the 29 questions, 2 have broadly covered enforcement. It is not accurate to say that opposition members have asked on a number of occasions about enforcement. Moreover, as the record shows, I have responded fully and accurately to all questions—it is, therefore, not accurate to say that opposition members have not received responses.</p>
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14. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood consultations

Question	Written Response
<p>Do you support the LTN without the outcome of consultation: Councillor's job is to listen and act, can I ask have you spoken to the local business on Cowley road or St Clements and what was their views?</p>	<p>No and Yes, as portfolio holder and a resident of and local Councillor for St Clement's. These businesses are the ones I use most often as they are a stone's throw from my home. My consultations are, as such, informal.</p> <p>I will preface my comments by saying that I was concerned to hear some local businesses say that they feel uncomfortable taking part in the debate about LTNs. The businesses which raised this concern said that they feel under significant, almost irresistible, pressure to take a public position in opposition to the LTNs even when that was not their overall view. In a local democracy, this is disturbing news.</p> <p>The view of businesses are mixed.</p> <p>Certainly business owners welcomed the face-face opportunity to discuss the schemes, even if they didn't always have the time to engage in discussion (they are, after all, trying to make a living and can't always stop to talk). Those local businesses that could stop to engage in longer discussion were interested to hear in greater detail the scale of the traffic and congestion problems we face as a city, the likely worsening of those problems, and the intent behind the schemes. They welcomed reassurance about the consultation of emergency services in the development of LTN</p>

14. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood consultations	
	<p>schemes, having believed that this did not take place. They recognised the need for action and, very fairly, said that they wanted to have a say over what that action looks like.</p> <p>The business owners with reservations were mostly concerned about a sense of their own individual mobility being restricted, rather than this being a blocker for business. They reflected that the connectivity of bus routes on the roads, particularly Cowley Road, meant that patrons tended to access their establishments by bus, cycling, or walking. Indeed, I was pleasantly surprised to hear (because I care about the growth of community wealth building and creating a 15-minute city) just how much my neighbours in St Clement's are their primary patrons. These residents are, as I know from living in the community and being their local councillor, actively seeking Low Traffic Neighbourhoods for their roads.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>The Oxford Mail reports that 80% of businesses are against LTNS. How many have you spoken to as a local councillor?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>The 80% quoted refers to the 25 businesses who responded to the consultation. I live on the Cowley Road and use many of the businesses there and so I have informal consultation with local businesses. Some of those businesses have expressed concerns about how the debate around LTNS is being conducted and how their views may be perceived.</p>

15. From Councillor Linda Smith to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood air quality 1	
<p>Question</p> <p>What monitoring is currently being carried out to assess the impact of the Temple Cowley Low Traffic Neighbourhood trial scheme on Lye Valley Ward?</p> <p>What does this monitoring show to be the scheme's current impact on vehicle movements and air pollution in Lye Valley</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The implementation of LTNs is a scheme being delivered by Oxfordshire County Council.</p> <p>Labour councillors were elected on a 2021 manifesto which committed to the acceleration of Oxford's journey to becoming zero carbon. One of the actions we committed to was this: "Support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to reduce rat-running traffic and encourage active travel." The City Council Cabinet will be asked on 21 July to approve the commissioning of Oxford City Council's EV Strategy, which says that the Council "seeks a reduction of private car ownership and use wherever possible" and "is committed to</p>

15. From Councillor Linda Smith to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood air quality 1

Ward, and in particular on Hollow Way?

bringing about a balanced road network which is open, safe, and accessible to all road users, so that citizens can move around their own city in their preferred modality as easily as possible”, which “will require the redistribution of Oxford’s road space to users of other vehicle types than the private car, which can slow the growth in predicted car use and enable infrastructure to increase the numbers of citizens getting around by cycling, walking, and bus.”

Done well, LTNs can be a good thing, one tool among many within the County Council’s toolkit to meet the goals of the City Council: reduced traffic, cleaner air, zero carbon communities, and people freely able to go anywhere, anytime. Clearly, we want pragmatic and open policymaking; we are not ideological about LTNs one way or another, and so we have been monitoring the air quality impacts of these schemes.

Thank you for a question on more or less the same issue at Cabinet on June 16. I draw on the relevant portion of my answer below.

Oxford City Council operates an extensive air quality network of 75 diffusion tubes which we manage on an annual basis, as part of our statutory duties of monitoring and reporting on air quality levels in the City. The City Council brings forward annual air quality updates to Council. This network was in place before the LTN trials.

Oxford City Council responded to the proposals for LTNs by creating a monitoring network of 16 extra diffusion tubes, specifically designed to assess the impacts of LTNs. Such is the coverage of our established monitoring network that the extra tubes were added only in locations where we feel the current air quality monitoring of 75 diffusion tubes does not provide adequate coverage. This includes locations that are currently inside these new LTN regions, but also locations that are on the outskirts of an LTN that might be affected.

There is a total of 14 monitoring locations for the Temple Cowley Lye Valley, and other adjacent areas.

The diffusion tubes are exposed and replaced every month, and there is a too small number of readings per tube to have the necessary robust understanding of the impacts of LTNs. As with any significant scheme, there has to be a period of time for impacts to be monitored,

15. From Councillor Linda Smith to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood air quality 1	
	<p>and we require a much bigger dataset.</p> <p>This is particularly necessary in the case of air quality because it is influenced by important external factors such as the weather. It is not as simple as saying that transport emissions alone contribute to air pollution. The less data we have to analyse because the trial is too brief, the greater the uncertainty in the results.</p>
Supplementary question	Verbal response
When might we see any information from the County Council regarding vehicle monitoring?	I am expecting a quarterly report from the County Council which will include information on vehicle monitoring so that we can understand the full impact of LTNs.

16. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood air quality 2	
Question	Written Response
On Cowley LTN, what measures has the council made to monitor air pollution on main roads like Oxford Road, Holloway Road, Church Cowley Road and other main roads where traffic has been diverted?	<p>Please refer to the response to Q15.</p> <p>Traffic may also be rising because we are gradually unlocking from the bus companies from running a third more buses than they need in order to meet their timetables because they spend so much time in road congestion.</p>
Supplementary question	Written response
Can you confirm the locations of the 14 monitoring points?	<p>Details of the locations will be circulated to members.</p> <p>Information on trends will be reflected in the Annual Air Quality Update.</p>

17. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Co-Wheels car sharing spaces	
Question	Written Response
Are there plans for more Co-Wheels car sharing spaces for East Oxford, and if not would the cabinet member support their introduction?	<p>The Council is committed to reducing car use and car journeys, and Car Clubs, particularly when fleets are electric, contribute towards the achievement of that policy goal, particularly for those who may be less able to afford the costs of car ownership.</p> <p>As per the recent Cabinet paper on Oxford's EV strategy, which is being commissioned this year, the Council is actively exploring the opportunity for further</p>

17. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – Co-Wheels car sharing spaces

charging bays for electric Car Club vehicles as part of a citywide approach to EV charging provision by Charge Point Operators. Our new Dynamic Purchasing System for EV goods and services has a Lot specific to Car Club charging that could be used for these purposes, once a formal mandate is in place.

There are no immediate plans to add to the car club bays in East Oxford. In the meantime, Car Clubs can request Transport Regulation Orders to be put in place directly with the Highways Authority to create new car club bays.

18. From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – City centre bike parking**Question**

There is a shortage of bike parking where people need it in the city centre, specifically on High Street and at Carfax Tower.

Please can you confirm the existing number of bike parking spaces at Carfax Tower and on the High Street respectively, and what plans do the city council have to increase bike parking facilities at Carfax Tower, and on the High Street?

Written Response

I agree that additional cycle parking, including well designed secure cycle parking, is required in the City Centre and indeed the city more widely. The challenge in the city centre is space to accommodate this, which is why I was pleased that the new administration at the County Council opted to extend the eScooter trial to district centres and wider Oxford instead of the city centre, as planned. Space in the city centre is at a premium and I would rather this space was provided to cycle parking instead of eScooter parking. I hope the councillor would agree. Active travel provides physical and mental health benefits, the latest ridership data for eScooters show that younger people are the dominant rider profile, raising questions about how much eScooters are achieving modal shift.

Officers at both councils liaise regularly on this issue looking to identify further opportunities. We have some funding available in the Council's capital programme to support additional cycle parking. I am liaising with the administration about cycling in the city including the city centre to identify opportunities to free up space on the highway for infrastructure like this. Officers have asked the county council for the current numbers of cycle parking in the locations you requested but they have not as yet heard back. Officers will follow up with this information once it is received.

I consulted with Cllr Miles' colleague, Cllr Tim Bearder, at Oxfordshire County Council who says that whilst better cycle parking in the city centre is desirable, he would want to look at projected need and locations in the context of future investments in Oxford City, and so

18.From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – City centre bike parking	
	could not commit to anything further at this juncture.
Supplementary question Would you consider a) installing cycle parking at the intersection of Queen Street, High Street and Cornmarket and b) cargo bike parking at the entrance to the Covered Market.	Verbal response I am happy to consider these proposals but they will need to be taken in the round in consultation with the County Council regarding other plans for the city centre e.g. any extension of the e-scooter trial.

19.From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – E-Scooter pilot 1	
Question In relation to the E-scooters trial, Are the riders exempt from wearing helmets? Are riders allowed to ride on the roads or footpath? Is there any enforcement if yes who is enforcing?	Written Response The e-scooter trial is a County Council project, and they have advised that the rules that apply to hire e-scooter users are very similar to those for cyclists (i.e. riders are strongly encouraged to wear helmets however this is not mandatory). E-scooter riders are also able to use roads and cycle tracks/ shared use path areas (in the area of operation); however, like cyclists they are not allowed to use footpaths.
Supplementary question In a recent interview on local radio a County Council representative made comments which contradict the written response and can you confirm who is responsible for enforcement?	Verbal response I cannot comment on the content of the radio interview. The written answered is based on the information provided by the County Council. The Police are the enforcement agency and I will raise Cllr Malik’s concerns with them at the local level.

20.From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – E-Scooter pilot 2	
Question Was an evaluation of the Voi electric scooter pilot scheme done before the area it covered was extended? If not, why was it felt appropriate to extend it?	Written Response The e-scooter trial is a County Council project. Having passed your question to the authority, they advised that an evaluation of the schemes safety performance, user compliance and analysis of demand for the service was

20. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – E-Scooter pilot 2

What data is being collected for evaluation, and does this include the number of accidents?

undertaken prior to expansion. A full evaluation of the trial will be undertaken by the County Council and at a national level by the Department for Transport at the end of the trial period.

21. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hayes – Seacourt extension payback period**Question**

The Extension to the Seacourt Park & Ride, despite being publicly opened, remains closed and is mostly enjoyed by children with radio-controlled cars. The main car park is hardly ever used to its full capacity. What is the projected timescale for payback of the capital cost of the Extension?

Written Response

The building is fully open and functioning.
The main car park extension is also fully complete but from a cost and maintenance point this has been temporarily barred off whilst usage levels remain low due to the pandemic. Pre-pandemic and evidenced as part of the planning application, the original park and ride was full very early in the morning and there was significant demand for the extension. We expect the very low levels currently being experienced to be temporary and for increased usage to return over time. This is particularly relevant given we want to encourage further modal shift over time compared to the modal split we currently have to support reduced congestion and improved air quality. The usage is being kept under review and the barriers can easily be removed to allow access. It remains too early to know what the new normal in terms of usage looks like. We have not adjusted the payback period for the capital cost.

Supplementary question

Please advise the timescale for the payback of the capital cost.

Verbal response

There is no firm timescale for payback due to the impact of the pandemic. When the information is available I will share it with members.

22. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hayes – Seacourt extension lighting**Question**

The Seacourt Extension is brilliantly lit every night despite the fact that it is not in use. Could the lights be turned off until such time as the Extension is opened?

Written Response

The lights have already been temporarily switched off this while the extension is not in use and barred off. These will be turned on when the extension is reopened when usage increase or if we consider it necessary to open the pedestrian/cycle link.

22.From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hayes – Seacourt extension lighting	
Supplementary question Can you confirm that it took a meeting with a local resident and a ward councillor before the lights were turned off.	Verbal response You will need to ask Cllr Cook.

23.From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – Combined emissions and congestion charge	
Question Will the City Council give full consideration in partnership with the County Council to a combined Emission and Congestion charge for the City within the ring road? One that could be carefully calibrated to encourage drivers with low and no emissions vehicles and also to sufficiently free up the Oxford roads of cars, vans and lorries so that there is space for cycle lanes and buses based upon up to date costings for the infrastructure, traffic modelling and financial modelling?	Written Response We have always recognised the need to both reduce congestion in the city <i>and</i> to improve air quality. Indeed, this City Council is the first local authority to set an air quality target which is tougher and tighter than the national legal target. That is why for several years we have been working jointly with Oxfordshire County Council to bring forward Connecting Oxford – a scheme designed to reduce traffic levels, increase bus use and improve active travel infrastructure - and develop Britain’s first Zero Emission Zone which will charge polluting traffic for access, so incentivising a shift to zero emission transport, and active travel. The linked Connecting Oxford programme, which has also been through more than one round of public consultation, is designed precisely to sufficiently free up Oxford’s roads of cars, vans and lorries so that there is space for cycle lanes and buses. Both schemes will clearly be based upon up to date costings for the infrastructure, traffic modelling and financial modelling.
Supplementary question The current technology for a ZEZ is very similar to that required for a congestion zone charge – could we not look at options for both approaches with colleagues at the County Council.	Verbal response The City and County Council are both committed to Connecting Oxford and the Zero Emission Zone.

24. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – Transport infrastructure investment

Question No one denies the threat of climate change. Do you agree with me the County Council needs to invest in the infrastructure ie the better public transport, safer segregated cycle lanes and better school allocation for children to stop parents driving to the school and have LTN 5-10 year strategy for the city?	Written Response Yes
Supplementary question Are you going to develop any policy on this or talk to your counterpart at the County Council.	Verbal response We are talking to the new administration at the County Council and the intent is to develop a strategic approach to traffic management.

Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities

In the absence of the Cabinet Member, the Leader of the Council responded to supplementary questions. The Cabinet Member provided written responses after the meeting, included here.

25. From Councillor Smowton to Councillor Aziz – Covid Support

Question

We note with concern the small proportion of COVID support grants that were approved in Oxford, compared with other local authorities. This may be due to a lower quality of application, or may be due to poor support or overly stringent enforcement on the Council's part.

Will the Council support an audit of random samples of these applications by a third party, to ascertain which is the case?

Written Response

The tables below show the latest figures applications for test and traces payments received to date as at 20-06-2021.

Test and Trace Applications received

	Up until 20.06.21
Total Decisions	1700
Successful	167
Mandatory scheme	132
Discretionary scheme	35
Unsuccessful	1533

Of those applications that have been unsuccessful, the reasons for this are as stated below

Reasons for unsuccessful cases (more than one can apply to each case)

	Until 20.06.21
Unsuccessful	1533
Not claiming benefit	1017
Hasn't self-isolated/registered/engaged with NHS	413
Is not employed	515
Has not lost income e.g. Is able to work from home or furloughed	834
Isolation dates prior to .start of scheme	2
Not contacted by test and trace (no CTAS ID)	311

In the case of those applicants who have not been eligible for the mandatory scheme a number have been considered for the discretionary scheme but 250 applications have been unsuccessful for that scheme with the reasons for this analysed below.

Reason unsuccessful discretionary (all cases up to 20.06.21)	Number
Earning between £306 and £500	79
Earning over £500 a week	67
Not replied to information request	48
Duplicate Form	15
Savings over 6k	13
Applied outside the deadline	6
No significant bills (living with parents)	5
No drop in earnings after checks	4
No NINO	3
Returning from abroad no needed to self-isolate (not eligible to claim)	3
Not in employment once we verified this	2
Furloughed at time of self-isolation	2
Withdrew application	2
Not living in Oxford	1
Total	250

To date an amount of £70,500 has been paid out in mandatory grant and an amount of £18,500 has been paid out in discretionary grant.

We are in regular contact with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) regarding these figures, and the Test and Trace scheme is regularly extended, now to the end of September. We receive regular top-ups to our funding and are waiting to go on a call with the DHSC this week to discuss how they would like us to use the latest top-up.

To reach our spend target on the Discretionary Scheme and having consulted with the DHSC, from 12th July we have increased the income level at which we would support the £500 payment to the Benefit Cap level of £384.62 from the current level of £306 per week in line with other Councils. This will support those staying at home during the current increase in cases in the city. Officers have discussed the City Council's approach to administering both the Mandatory and Discretionary to ensure that our interpretation of the scheme was not detrimentally affecting our local people and DHSC were happy with our application of the rules.

We have many people coming forward who are able to use technology and ensure that they are correctly obtaining support which is available. There will be some people who slip through the net and as a Council we are endeavouring to ensure that we capture these people to give them the support that they need. In comparison to other cities across the UK, our experience of Oxford is that the demand is different. An example being that pre Covid the city had little unemployment according to DWP statistics. This does not mean unemployment doesn't exist, many in Oxford are self-employed or changing careers.

The DHSC give us 2 months funding at a time, and we have to report to them on our

spend regularly before they give us each tranche of funding. It is therefore unnecessary to require a separate audit of our processes, as they are monitoring our performance and we do contact them regularly with any issues.

I am happy that the officers have undertaken the administration of this process in Oxford in a diligent and appropriate manner having regard to the principles of the scheme as laid out by the DHSC and in doing so are ensuring the appropriate use of public money. I do not believe an independent review of how this scheme has been managed will conclude anything different.

Supplementary question

The response lists a number of reasons for rejection from the scheme, do we know how many of those applicants “fell short” due to lack of documentation or an inability to evidence their situation.

Verbal response

The written response details the number of people who did not respond to our request for information and/or withdrew their application. The real problem has been the level of misinformation about the scheme from government and the Test and Trace system. We have followed the scheme rules and that means that the vast majority of applicants were not eligible.

26. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Aziz – Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy

Question

Oxford has been a City of Sanctuary for over a decade and I am proud that we have so often welcomed refugees, asylum seekers and those in need to the city.

As such, can the portfolio holder tell me if the City Council will be building on this work and taking part in the Government’s Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy by helping those fleeing danger in Afghanistan to resettle in Oxford?

Written Response

Our commitment to being a City of Sanctuary is unwavering. This year, building on our legacy, we once again agreed for the City Council to continue to play a full part in supporting the delivery of the UK Resettlement Scheme.

Our immediate focus is on investing resources to successfully deliver on this scheme, and ensure that those people fleeing persecution are provided a safe haven in Oxford, including the necessary infrastructure support.

Any person outside the framework of the UKRS, and as per our commitment to being a City of Sanctuary commitment will receive it within available resources.

It is important to note funding for the Afghan scheme will not cover the costs or resources required to provide people the necessary support, something that the LGA is raising urgently with government on behalf of local councils.

26. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Aziz – Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy	
	Nevertheless, while we will not have officially signed up for the Afghan resettlement scheme, our commitment to continue to be a City of Sanctuary for all asylum seekers and refugees remains.
Supplementary question Is the limited funding for the Afghan Scheme the reason that Oxford did not take part in the scheme?	Verbal response No decision has been taken about our involvement other than to make clear, in parallel with other local authorities, that the government needs to make proper provision to support people under the Afghan Scheme.

Cabinet Member for Parks and Waste Reduction

In the absence of the Cabinet Member, the Leader of the Council responded to supplementary questions. The Cabinet Member provided written responses after the meeting, included here.

27. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Arshad – Verges	
Question Can the cabinet member outline the City Council's policy on the use of pesticide and herbicide sprays on verges within the City?	Written Response There is no specific policy in place for the use of herbicides and pesticides. We do not use pesticides in any form but our contractor does use a herbicide for the treatment of weeds on the highway and other specified hard surfaces such as parking areas, garage areas and HRA sites. Our contractor also has the ability to treat Japanese knotweed where needed. Please note that we do not treat grass verges. The treatment is typically applied to the back edges of pavements and along the kerbside. Weed treatment is scheduled to take place three times per year by fully trained and qualified staff.
Supplementary question What brand or type of herbicide is used?	Written response The herbicide used is Glyphosate which is widely recognised as the only effective chemical treatment. This is a 'systemic' treatment which is absorbed through the foliage and kills the root of the plant preventing grow-back.

28. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Arshad - Grass verges	
<p>Question</p> <p>Grass verges are now being cut less frequently, which is important for increasing biodiversity, but the Council is not planning to introduce wildflower seeds.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet member consider the best practice guide produced by Plantlife which recommends an initial seeding, using seeds appropriate to the area, to enable wildflower species to take hold?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Wherever possible, the indigenous flora that would grow in any particular location, depending on the geology, soil type and hydrological conditions should be allowed to develop naturally to encourage the greatest range of species.</p> <p>This is particularly important in Oxford where the geology varies greatly, as does the soil and hydrological conditions.</p> <p>Sowing of generic species (over planting) works against this natural process and can actually reduce biodiversity. Some verges which remain species poor may need intervention, but this will need on-going careful assessment. Some of the verges left uncut this year have already produced naturally occurring wild flowers, including orchids.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Have the Portfolio Holder and officers read the reports by Plant Life about seeding grass verges?</p>	<p>Verbal response from Cllr Brown</p> <p>Specialist officers advise that natural seeding is the preferred approach to ensure native species and to promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Written response:</p> <p>I will bring the reports to their attention.</p>

29. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Arshad – Temple Cowley community hall	
<p>Question</p> <p>After the closure of Temple Cowley swimming pool there is no community facility in Temple Cowley. We need a community hall in Temple Cowley. Would you support the community facility to be built at Marsh park?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There are a number of community accessible facilities within the wider catchment area. These include the soon to be improved East Oxford Community Centre, Asian Cultural Centre, Regal Community Centre, Oxford Spires Academy, St Gregory The Great School, Florence Park Community Centre, Cowley Workers Sports and Social Club, The Venue at Cowley.</p> <p>There is currently no Council budget to develop or operate a facility of this type at Cowley Marsh park. If there were community groups or organisations interested in developing a community facility within Cowley Marsh Park, they would need to ensure that they could demonstrate a clear need for the facility and</p>

29. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Arshad – Temple Cowley community hall	
	<p>that it was deliverable through a business case.</p> <p>A fair and equitable competitive process would also need to be undertaken to ensure that all interested groups/organisations were able to apply and necessary diligence undertaken such as planning and feasibility.</p>
Supplementary question	Verbal response
<p>None of the listed facilities are not within Temple Cowley ward. Will you reconsider the position in future plans.</p>	<p>The Portfolio Holder is very familiar with and committed to serving the needs of the local community. Temple Cowley is well served by community facilities within the wider catchment area. Residents don't always recognise ward boundaries and other factors influence which community facility they use.</p>

30. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Arshad – Plastic packaging recycling	
Question	Written Response
<p>A report from Greenpeace published in April showed that over half of household plastic packaging that the public is told is recycled is actually sent overseas, where it is too often dumped or burned. Can the portfolio holder reassure us that this is not the case with household plastic packaging collected in Oxford and can they provide further details on the end destination for the city's plastic recycling?</p>	<p>We've recently requested data on our recycling end destinations for recycling from Viridor, who operate our materials recycling facility. While some of our recycling is sent overseas, most plastics are actually recycled here in the UK, much of it by Viridor themselves, who also own and operate plastic reprocessing plants. The percentages of recyclable materials recycled inside and outside the UK are as follows:</p> <p>Plastics</p> <p>Exported: 17.91% (243.11 tonnes) Recycled in the UK: 82.09% (1114.09 tonnes)</p> <p>Paper</p> <p>Exported: 89.27% (1865.21 tonnes) Recycled in the UK: 10.73% (224.09 tonnes)</p> <p>Card/cardboard</p> <p>Exported: 97.80% (2179.22 tonnes) Recycled in the UK: 2.20% (49.09 tonnes)</p> <p>Metals</p> <p>Exported: 10.12% (57.21 tonnes) Recycled in the UK: 89.88% (507.85 tonnes)</p> <p>Glass</p>

30.From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Arshad – Plastic packaging recycling	
	<p>Exported: 0.00%</p> <p>Recycled in the UK: 100.00% (1986.89 tonnes)</p> <p>We continue to work with plant operators to encourage them to recycle locally where possible.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Why are the export levels for card and paper so high?</p>	<p>Written response</p> <p>Recycled commodities, like many products, are a truly global trade. Fibre packaging is produced abroad and comes into the UK to be sold, used and then collected as recycling before it arrives at Viridor’s MRF. There is huge demand in SE Asia and India (previously China until recent years) as this is where the majority of the world’s paper mills are located. They are a major markets for UK fibre as the product quality is high. The material is shipped to these mills to be re-manufactured into new packaging and it is a constant cycle around the world.</p> <p>There is limited processing capacity within the UK, with circa 8mtpa paper and card collected each year but only 3mtpa processing capacity available at a small number of paper mills that still operate . Consequently, the majority of collected materials are exported.</p> <p>As newspaper and magazine readership declines as we continue into the digital age, cardboard packaging is rising as a trend with more and more residents shopping online. This means that in the near future there is likely to be additional capacity within the UK as waste and resource organisations look to develop facilities fit for the future.</p> <p>Viridor Resource Management (VRM), is responsible for marketing these materials optimally, both nationally and internationally as appropriate, to ensure maximised financial and environmental benefits. VRM sells large amounts of paper and card products to manufacturers in the UK.</p> <p>VRM's prime objective is to ensure that the quality products generated are positioned and placed within the UK, European and global markets in a timely, professional and balanced manner to ensure the secure, reliable, financially stable and environmentally sustainable use of the recycle.</p> <p>As an ethical operator we work hard to ensure all our output materials are used appropriately and in the most sustainable way. With this in mind, VRM are careful who they approve to sell materials on to. In line with the Proximity Principle, our preference is always to</p>

30. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Arshad – Plastic packaging recycling

minimise the distance any materials travel. The end destinations used for Crayford MRF outputs are carefully selected in line with this, in compliance with the Waste Hierarchy, and also dependent upon their appropriateness and distance from site.

The card and paper segregated on site is used within the UK, as well as overseas. Depending on the grade of material it will be marketed appropriately to achieve best value in the most sustainable outlet. VRM liaise with their purchasers to ensure the materials are sold for the best recycling, reuse or recovery purposes. This type of material is generally turned in to a pulp to produce new card and paper products.

31. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Arshad – Bee Meadows**Question**

As a means of supporting biodiversity in general, and the bee populations in particular, does the City Council have plans to create bee meadows in parts of the city's parks and open space and along highway verges that the city is responsible for maintaining?

Written Response

The City Council in Partnership with ODS is implementing the City Council's biodiversity action plan. Within this plan steps such as long grass verges, meadows have/are been implemented. This work serves to increase habitat for birds and insects including bees.

32. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Arshad – Five Mile Drive recreation ground**Question**

In the light of several recent incursions by caravans and other vehicles in the recreation ground north of Five Mile Drive -- which have caused considerable inconvenience to residents, and have cost City Council officer time, and no doubt considerable money, to deal with - can the cabinet member inform Council how it is proposed to physically prevent further such incursions?

Written Response

There is no easy or cheap solution to this problem as any entrance security designed to protect against mass vehicle trespass would also keep out emergency vehicles; it is particularly vital there is no hindrance to ambulances accessing these busy sports pitches.

Previous experience suggests that mass vehicle trespass also relies on cutting gear that can breach most locks and gates - one group recently broke into Wolvercote bathing area car park despite there being a height barrier and safety lock.

32.From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Arshad – Five Mile Drive recreation ground	
Supplementary question Urges Portfolio Holder to ask officers to do further research into potential solutions.	Verbal response Officers have tried to find a solution but the specifics of the location make it difficult. I suggest that ward councillors discuss the matter with the Portfolio Holder and officers.

33.From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Arshad – ‘No Mow’ May	
Question Can the cabinet member confirm whether the City Council participated in ‘No Mow May’, whether it proposes to next year, and what impact any participation had or is expected to have?	Written Response The City Council didn’t participate in No Mow May, we implemented our own long grass policy this year. If there was appetite to participate next year, the public would need to be consulted first.
Supplementary question Do you agree that, subject to public consultation, it would be good to participate in ‘No Mow May’ in 2022 to demonstrate our commitment to the environment.	Written response We would be happy to participate. However, this would need to be approved by OCC’s Green and Blue Spaces Development.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery

34.From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Hollingsworth – Private rented sector evictions	
Question What data does the Council currently have regarding evictions from Oxford’s Private Rented Sector, the reasons for them, and consequences for homelessness?	Written Response The Council’s data on the causes of statutory homelessness shows the ending of private rented tenancies being the most significant cause in the city, although the eviction ban throughout the pandemic did decrease occurrences. In 19/20, 42% of households we owed a Homelessness Prevention Duty towards lost their last settled home due to their private rented tenancy ending, making it the most common reason. Comparing to regional and national averages, our district neighbours, and comparable urban authorities, the ending of private rented tenancies comparably has one of the greatest impacts in Oxford. Further information on PRS evictions in Oxford can be found in

34. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Hollingsworth – Private rented sector evictions

the recently published Homelessness Review.

Since the eviction ban ended, 12 cases have approached Options following loss of accommodation in the PRS

- 6 approached due to rent arrears.
- 6 approached due to their landlord selling the property (although some of these are likely to also relate to rent arrears.)

In addition, the Tenancy Relations Officer in Regulatory Services and Community Safety investigates illegal eviction and harassment and provides advice and support to private rented tenants. Data is held on enquiry type and homelessness preventions. We do not record the reason for illegal eviction although officer knowledge informs us the common reasons include: landlord unaware of correct legal process, failure to pay rent, landlord wants to move into property, landlord wants to do repairs, notice to quit ended and landlord not sought a court order, tenant sub-let.

2020/21 data:

- Threatened illegal eviction: 193 cases leading to 169 successful homelessness preventions (i.e. we prevented the eviction happening) (the remaining cases may not have wanted our intervention)
- Unlawful illegal eviction (enquiry made after the eviction occurred): 7 cases, leading to 2 successful homelessness preventions (i.e. we got their home back) (the remaining cases may not have wanted our intervention)
- Harassment: 12 cases leading to 3 successful homelessness preventions (the remaining cases may not have wanted our intervention)
- 233 miscellaneous tenancy advice requests (e.g. early release from tenancy, general landlord & tenant rights, deposits, undertaking repairs without consent, failure of landlord to give notice of entry, landlords requesting advice on correct legal process to end tenancy) – we do not carry out full homeless prevention on these cases.

Overall 445 enquiries were made in 2021/21.

35. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Hollingsworth – Oxford North contractors

Question

How is the Portfolio Holder responding to concerns raised by residents about the behaviour of contractors developing Oxford North on behalf of St. Johns, given reports of a dead fawn and chemical spraying at the canal-side site?

Written Response

While these claims were raised on social media, and subsequently in the local media, no reports were made to the Council and officers have not identified any evidence to support intervention.

36. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Passivhaus standards

Question

The Council recently announced a partnership with Hill to build Passivhaus properties on Horse Field in Iffley Village.

- 1) Have Hill had any prior experience of building to passivhaus standards?
- 2) Many properties which aspire to be Passivhaus do not achieve their goal (for example due to poor air tightness). Will the houses be independently certified to Passivhaus standards?
- 3) Are there penalty clauses in the contract with Hill to ensure Passivhaus delivery?
- 4) How will inconsistencies between Passivhaus Standards and the Council's own local plan requirements be managed? (for example the Local Plan requires some onsite renewables whereas the Passivhaus Standard is focused on building fabric)

Written Response

The partnership is between Oxford City Homes Limited, which is a separate legal entity, rather than with the Council itself. It's important to note that my answer here is ***about*** the company, rather than on *behalf* of the company, as legally it's only the company's directors who can speak for it.

1. Hill have had extensive experience of low and zero carbon, including building the UK's largest Passivhaus development, a scheme that has already won a number of awards for innovation.
2. The homes will be independently certified that they meet PassivHaus standards
3. Any build contract between Hill and OCHL would be based on one of the nationally (or internationally) approved contract forms and would therefore include performance clauses, but as the scheme has not yet been designed and been approved for planning permission, no such contract yet exists (and would be a matter for the company).
4. Any inconsistency between a proposed scheme and the Local Plan would be addressed through the planning application process, but it is important to note that basis of the question is incorrect: the Local Plan 2036 does not require onsite renewables. Policy RE1 requires improvements in energy performance against specific targets, and says that these can be

36. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Passivhaus standards	
	achieved “ through on-site renewables and other low carbon technologies and/or energy efficiency measures” (my emphasis). There is therefore no contradiction between the PassivHaus standard and the requirements of the Local Plan.

37. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley biodiversity net gain	
Question How will biodiversity net gain be delivered on the Horse Field site (Iffley Village) which is already so ecologically rich?	Written Response The issue of biodiversity net gain will be a matter for any planning application for the site to address, including a survey of the current biodiversity of the site, which has not yet been completed.
Supplementary question Is it realistic to think bio-diversity net gain can be delivered through the planning application.	Verbal response It is a legal requirement of planning applications to demonstrate how bio-diversity net gain will be delivered.

38. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley ecological survey	
Question Has the Council undertaken a recent ecological survey of the sensitive Horse Field site in Iffley Village and neighbouring area (home to at least one protected species) before using heavy machinery on-site?	Written Response This site is not owned by the Council, and the Council has not carried out any work on the site. The owner of the site, and the body that undertook work on the site, is Oxford City Housing Limited, which is a separate legal entity. I am therefore answering the question <u>about</u> the company, not <u>on behalf</u> of the company; only the company’s directors can legally answer for the company. An initial species survey was conducted prior to the site’s acquisition by OCHL, a supplementary badger survey was completed in early 2021 and a baseline ecological survey was completed in June 2021 with additional species-specific ecological surveys to be carried out over the coming weeks. These are being commissioned by OCHL, as the owner of the site.

39. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley site damage	
Question Why has heavy machinery been used on the Horse Field site in Iffley Village in both January and June 2021 by Oxford City Housing, resulting in damage to the meadows and their wildlife, despite no planning permission having been granted for the site?	Written Response The owner of the site, and the body that undertook work on the site, is Oxford City Housing Limited, which is a separate legal entity. I am therefore answering the question <i>about</i> the company, not <i>on behalf</i> of the company; only the company's directors can legally answer for the company. The works conducted in both January and June 2021 used industry standard techniques, machinery and equipment that was appropriate to ensure the efficacy of the works required. Planning consent was not required for the works.

40. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Lantham Way Passivhaus standard	
Question The City Council has purchased land at Lantham Way, Littlemore, for the building of housing which, according to the consultation introduction will only build to the thermal performance standards in our Local Plan and not to Passivhaus standards, as the Council has the power to do. Why has the City decided not to set an example and build houses that will need retrofitting within a couple of decades? Will they be built using a 'fabric first' approach?	Written Response The specification for the Lantham Way development is for it to achieve a 70% reduction of carbon emissions compared to current building regulations, which is a substantially higher standard than the Local Plan requirement of a 40% reduction below building regulations. Oxford City Council is committed to a fabric first approach for all of their developments. The Council is undertaking feasibility work for the delivery of other energy models such as Passivhaus in future housing developments, but this requires further testing and feasibility work for different types of development form, and is not proposed for Lantham Way.
Supplementary question What is the proposed feasibility work as existing developments are already proving viable?	Verbal response It is looking at the difference between schemes for houses and flats.

41. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Hollingsworth – Lantham Way social rent percentage	
Question What proportion of	Written Response All 15 of the homes proposed for building at Lantham

41. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Hollingsworth – Lantham Way social rent percentage	
<p>“affordable” to social rent is proposed at Lantham Way, and why was the possibility of building 100% for social rent rejected?</p>	<p>Way are affordable housing. The current proposal is that eight of the homes (53%) will be social rented properties, above the Local Plan requirement for 40%. The remaining 7 properties (47%) will be either shared ownership or other affordable tenures, above the Local Plan requirement for 10%.</p> <p>This is not a City Council owned site, and the acquisition of the site from Oxfordshire County Council was at a price that represented best value to the seller, when compared to a sale to a developer on the open market. The cost of the site, and the cost of developing it, mean that a 100% social housing development was not possible here. Had the City Council not acquired the site, and a private developer bought it instead, it is likely that any proposed development would have had considerably fewer social and affordable housing units on it.</p>

42. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Cycle storage guidance	
<p>Question</p> <p>Many residents in Oxford lack space to store their bikes inside their homes and so wish to build storage facilities in their front gardens. Currently there is no planning guidance for doing this in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, so would the portfolio holder support adding guidance on cycle storage in front gardens in the updated local plan which the Council is currently consulting on?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As we encourage more journeys to be taken by ‘active travel’ modes like walking and cycling, it is vital that there are sufficient secure parking spaces in both private and public places for cycles, in particular for more expensive electric and/or cargo bikes. Planning guidance, such as a Technical Advice Note (TAN) or other formal document would assist householders in find the right designs, and give them advice on – for example – the necessary steps to balance the demands of the City’s many conservation areas with new structures at the front of their homes. A new TAN on Car and Bicycle Parking is currently being produced by officers which will address this issue; the document will be published on the Council’s website shortly.</p>

43. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hollingsworth – Local Plan site allocations	
<p>Question</p> <p>Does the Cabinet member</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The 2040 Local Plan, like all Local Plans, needs to</p>

43. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hollingsworth – Local Plan site allocations	
<p>agree during the review of 2040 local plan Oxford city needs to expand rather than invading any green spaces left in Oxford? Because these open green spaces makes Oxford what it is.</p>	<p>follow an objective process for assessing needs and then allocating sites to meet (or go as far as possible to meet) those needs. The needs that a Local Plan will take into account are those for homes, for jobs, for community facilities and for access to green and open space. For the round of Local Plans across Oxfordshire that includes the current 2036 Local Plan, the same objective tests were used to assess potential development sites in the Green Belt and on green sites in Oxford and outside, and it's important when our neighbouring Councils are having to allocate sites in their areas to meet the housing needs of Oxford that we continue to use the same objective assessment processes as our partners. To do otherwise would be to undermine the credibility of our Local Plan, and leave it open to objections from surrounding local planning authorities.</p> <p>No green space is allocated for housing lightly, and any such allocation has to balance up the benefits of the current use against the benefits of the proposed use, with great weight given to the preservation of green space. That is why in the current Local Plan the vast majority of green spaces, of all types, across the city are strongly protected. It is too early to comment on the likely results of the assessments of need and the assessments of potential allocation of sites to meet those needs in the 2040 Local Plan, but as with the Local Plan 2036 these needs will be balanced against the need for protection of green spaces, based on a full understanding of their multi-functional benefits.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>In the 2040 Local Plan is there a proposal for a burial site for the Muslim community?</p>	<p>Verbal response followed by written response.</p> <p>It is not part of the 2040 Local Plan. However, the Council in discussion with landowner for site for new cemetery outside the city and I will ask the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Arshad, to provide a written response on this.</p> <p>Written response from Cllr Arshad</p> <p>A new cemetery is not in the 2040 Local Plan however the Council are looking at a potential site which will be available to all faiths for burial.</p>

44. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Hollingsworth – Tree Preservation	
Question	Written Response

44. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Hollingsworth – Tree Preservation

A substantial stand of mature trees exists beyond the north end of Home Close and Rosamund Road in Lower Wolvercote in a field which abuts onto the Mill Site development of CALA Homes and is owned by CALA. They are of considerable local amenity as a visual and sound barrier between a number of houses and the A34; as having considerable wildlife value; and as veteran trees.

Since amenity is one of the principal tests applied when considering whether to establish a Tree Preservation Order, does the member agree with me that a TPO should be applied in this instance?

The proper process for applying for a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is clearly laid out in both law and the City Council's Constitution, and is delegated to Planning Officers unless called in or otherwise referred to the appropriate Committee. It is not for the Cabinet member to unilaterally disregard that proper process. I recommend that the Councillor seeks, if he wishes, a TPO in the usual way and through the proper channels.

Leader of the Council

45. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Brown – Public conveniences

Question

As a City that is heavily dependent on visitors coming into the city centre what is the provision for public lavatories? Does the City Council consider it unacceptable to have inadequate provision in the city centre?

Written Response

Oxford's historic city centre has four sites; Gloucester Green, Town Hall, Market St and Magdalen St although the latter is currently closed due to Covid restrictions. In addition facilities at Oxpens and Speedwell St are within a 10 minute walk. Any expansion of the Council provision in this area will require significant capital investment and revenue implications which would need to be budgeted.

All venues such as bars and restaurants will have provision and the Westgate Centre also has significant facilities freely accessible to the public. In addition common tourist destinations such as Oxford's many museums and galleries also have toilets that are available to the public.

Supplementary question

Please can you confirm the opening hours

Written response

The City centre toilets in Gloucester Green, Market St, Magdalen St and Oxpens are currently open 8.30 to 5.30, 7 days a week.

46.From Councillor Miles to Councillor Brown – Town Hall art

<p>Question</p> <p>How many paintings are there on the walls of the town hall overall, of these what is the number of portraits and specifically how many are of women, and how many of men?</p> <p>With this in mind, what steps has the council taken to improve the gender and ethnic diversity of the paintings within the Town Hall so that they better represent the gender and ethnic diversity of our city?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There are 115 paintings/artwork on display within the Town Hall, out of these 45 are portraits showing people and the breakdown is as follows:</p> <p>Male – 37 Female – 3 Male & Female – 2</p> <p>We have raised this issue previously, but there are complications because the Town Hall is a listed building and so Town Hall staff have sought advice from conservation colleagues. Previous advice was that we can add paintings where there is space but they would have to match the rest of the room - for example the frame would need to be the same as the rest. No further action was then taken as there was no budget allocated to acquire new art.</p> <p>I raised this issue again a couple of months ago and in June 2021 council officers started liaising with colleagues in our conservation team about being able to replace paintings and they are taking further advice with partners. Once we have further conservation advice we can look into options and costs. I have particularly asked if we could consider loans of art to and from other Oxford institutions. There are at least two works of art of a former and current female councillor which it would be fantastic to display.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>Would the Council agree to establish a cross party working group to address this discrepancy? And to the use of crowd-funding for artwork to address the gender and ethnicity imbalance?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>We will check the figures for the breakdown and circulate correct information.</p> <p>Thank you for the suggestions on potential themes and sources of alternative artwork.</p> <p>We recognise that the artwork is not representative of the diversity of the city or the Council. But listed building status makes it very difficult to replace art work within the building. We are currently taking advice on what we can achieve within these constraints and when it is available then it would be possible to have informal discussion groups.</p> <p>But we must recognise that this is not likely to be a priority in terms of funding by the Council. So any solution needs to be a zero cost option.</p>

47. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Brown – Air conditioned emergency shelters

<p>Question</p> <p>As part of the City Council’s emergency planning, what provision does the City have to provide freely accessible air conditioned space for council tenants, and homeless and vulnerable people in the event of an extreme heat wave or heat dome developing over Oxford, as has happened in Seattle and Portland recently?</p> <p>Secondly, has the City Council liaised with the County Council over their provision of emergency shelters for the local population?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>In the event of extreme or adverse weather affecting the area the City Council and ODS work with other local agencies involved in Emergency Planning including the County Council, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue, Thames Valley Police and the NHS. This would be guided by the frameworks set by Thames Valley Resilience Partnership and Oxfordshire Adverse Weather Plans. This week the partnership will discuss the impact of the heatwave particularly on highways and railway lines.</p> <p>The City Council, in partnership with the County Council, has developed short-term provision for shelters in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. This is primarily for residents displaced by flooding or terrorist activity. Their use as emergency shelters for other purposes would be decided by the County Council and the cost and resource requirements would be significant.</p> <p>OCC Housing provide advice to tenants on what to do in hot weather, prioritising support to tenants in Housing for Older People schemes. If the incident was serious enough we would enact Business Continuity Plans and Housing which would include measures similar to those that were in place during the Covid lockdown with a single point of contact and welfare checks on vulnerable residents and actions necessary to protect them.</p> <p>In terms of homeless residents, our providers are taking the necessary measures to safeguard people in their accommodation. For rough sleepers OCC Homelessness Service is working with St Mungo’s Outreach service to provide water and sunscreen and welfare checks as well as information on day services available to people sleeping rough.</p> <p>Converting existing public buildings into hot weather relief centres would displace existing services and as stated previously be at significant cost.</p>
<p>Supplementary question</p> <p>We do need some sort of provision if we are to avoid fatalities in the future. Is this something we can do with the County Council and is there likely to be an outcome?</p>	<p>Verbal response</p> <p>Existing facilities will be made available in response to any future emergency. I recognise the points made but there are no plans to build specific air-conditioned shelters for this purpose.</p>

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To: Council

Date: 26 July 2021

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

Introduction

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

Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Address by Linda Booker – in support of petition 'stop the so called regeneration of Blackbird Leys
2. Address by Evelyn Sanderson, Friends of the Fields Iffley - The Value of the Meadows in Iffley Conservation Area as a Community Asset
3. Address by Roger Crisp, Friends of Old Marston – development in Old Marston

Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Address by Linda Booker – in support of petition 'stop the so called regeneration of Blackbird Leys' (Spindleberry Park)

Do the most deprived people in Oxford really need more housing, or do they require alternative investment with access to employment and income, access to education, skills and training, and access to health and disability services as well as crime prevention investment?

We as residents from within Blackbird Leys are calling on Government to interject and stop the development of almost 300 homes within Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook Wards, which form Blackbird Leys Parish. We do of course have many reasons as to why this project should NOT go ahead. There are over 5000 homes situated in the parish with almost 14000 residents, the residents have one doctors surgery, 3 primary schools and 1 college, along with a secondary school placed just outside of the parish boundaries in Littlemore.

Firstly, the people of Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook suffer immense amounts of deprivation in many ways. The residents of Northfield Brook are positioned as the most deprived people in the whole of Oxford, whilst also sitting in the top 10% of most deprived across the country. The people of Blackbird Leys follow shortly behind in the top 20% bracket of most deprived in the country.

Residents of Northfield Brook and Blackbird Leys wards combined, have 5 from 8 of their Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the top 10% bracket and 2 from 8 within the top 20% bracket of most deprived across the country when it comes to the deprivation of Education, Skills and Training.

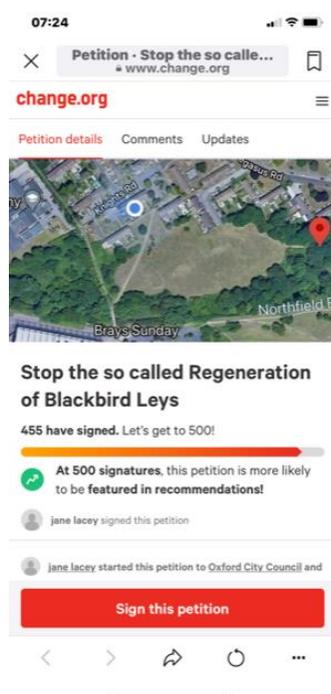
Secondly, when it comes to Crime, Income, Employment and Health Deprivation in Blackbird Leys. Residents across 3 out of the 4 LSOAs are within the top 30% nationally, of being deprived across the board, with at least 1 area being within the top 20%.

Thirdly, residents in 5 from 8 of LSOAs, across both Northfield Brook and Blackbird Leys wards, are rated at 40% most deprived or better, when it comes to deprivation with Barriers to Housing and Services.

Furthermore, statistics from End Child Poverty, estimate that 45.2% of children are living in poverty in Blackbird Leys, as well as 44.6% within Northfield Brook, calculated after housing costs.

Lastly, this project is set to sacrifice recreational land, to form housing. As well as an immense reduction in the size of the community centre. With such an increase in property numbers leading to an increase in residential population, this project also seeks to further reduce the community opportunity. At the same time, this project is set to bring NO direct employment opportunities for the local community, NO educational investment for children nor adults, NO investment into the local health services and finally NO investment into the prevention of local crime rates.

Bearing all of this in mind, it appears that there is a severe lack of investment within the communities that already exist. It would therefore be unreasonable and completely unnecessary if Oxford City Council were to go ahead with the plans, to squeeze almost 300 homes into an area whereby investment is clearly needed in people rather than in market sale and 'affordable' rented Catalyst property.



Written Response from the Cabinet Member, Councillor Hollingsworth, read out at the meeting

More homes are needed across the whole of Oxford. Alongside new homes must come access to employment, education, training, health services for all. That is why the council is working, both using its own resources and together with partners like the County Council and the NHS, to deliver all of these alongside new homes.

The Blackbird Leys scheme itself will deliver wider benefits in the local area. For example, we are working with our development partner Catalyst, Job Centre Plus, local schools and in particular the City of Oxford College to ensure that it will generate local employment during its construction, including through the delivery of apprenticeships, traineeships, reskilling, mentoring and support for local people.

The scheme is delivering a new public square and enhanced cycle and pedestrian facilities. The square will be integrated with the new community centre to broaden the range of activities on offer and include active play spaces and areas for community events to take place.

Both the shopping and community centre buildings are nearing the end of their life and their existing layout and design does not work well for current users. Replacing these with new spaces that work better for retailers and for users of the community centre alike will be significant benefit for the community. We know from the feedback we have received that the current community centre design is restrictive and inefficient. As well as being more flexible and therefore more open for a wider range of uses and groups, the new community centre is being designed to be zero carbon which will make it more affordable to run. We have appointed a team that is dedicated to working with local people to develop the design and use of the community centre to ensure it is as local people want and need it.

The scheme is delivering a range of new homes to address the need for affordable housing. Over 50% will be for social rent to those on the Council's housing register in greatest need and a further 25% will be for shared ownership to help local people onto the housing ladder. At present there are 3,165 households on our housing register and 16% of these are from Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards – double the average for each ward across the city. It is local people in the Leys who stand to benefit most from the new housing.

This scheme is locally extremely important in delivering long term changes to support the community. The new community centre, public square, shops and homes are an opportunity for real change and also aim to encourage wider investment in the future.

2. Address by Evelyn Sanderson, Friends of the Fields Iffley - The Value of the Meadows in Iffley Conservation Area as a Community Asset

1. Let the Community fundraise to buy the Meadows; 2. Review land use in the 2036 Local Plan

Over the summer, shoppers in Broad Street can enjoy Broad Meadow, courtesy of Oxford City Council. But Broad Meadow is a fake, fast-food meadow for rapid consumption. In September it will be gone.

So how might we value the **real meadows** in the **Iffley Conservation area**:

The ones that are full of wildlife and protected species?

The ones that soak up rainwater and capture carbon?

The ones that form a nature corridor along the Thames as well as a corridor for people who walk and cycle along the rural lanes that border the fields. A designated quiet route for active travel for up to 900 people every day.

The meadows that once had public access and were at the heart of a village community?

The ones that are a heritage, Oxford-wide resource in a rural conservation area?

The permanent, living, evolving meadows, nourishing humans as well as nature at a time of crisis for both?

These real meadows, the Horse Fields, are in Iffley - which means "Meadows of Gifts" in Anglo Saxon. They have been giving, as unploughed wildflower meadows, since the Domesday book. They are the **last remaining ancient meadows in the village. In the UK, only 3% of the wildflower meadows**. Yet the Council have allocated them for 30 houses and bought them for £4.5 million.

Planning policy dictates that any development should conserve and enhance this rural Conservation Area. Building here is clearly contrary to the Council's own policy.

We agree that **Oxford urgently needs more genuinely affordable housing**. That is why people in Iffley are **not** opposed to the 84 houses planned for Iffley, **just 200m away from the Horse Fields**, on former Iffley Mead Playing Field. We want them **ALL to be for social housing**.

But where should development stop? Where is the destructive threshold that means we lose what is of value in terms of heritage, biodiversity and community?

Although Oxford's housing need is given as the reason given for destroying the meadows in Iffley. with the promise of only 12 houses promised for social rents, this does not add up. The real reason for development of this **high value land is for profit**.

The Council Leader Susan Brown has written to us to say that it is acceptable to **make money out of green spaces in the city**. NO, this is **unacceptable, unsustainable, short-term exploitation** of irreplaceable green spaces, which in Iffley are also heritage assets.

We and **the 9000 people who signed our petition to save the meadows from development**, think they have much greater value as a resource for community and nature.

In March 2021, we wrote to put this idea to the Shareholders and Joint Ventures Committee, who oversee Oxford City Housing Ltd, and to ask them **to allow the community time to fundraise to buy the land**.

This request fits with the **Conditions of Sale** in which the Council are required to make

*'reasonable endeavours to **take into consideration the views of the local community** and that the development **meets local need**.'*

But the Councillors on the committee **did not reply**. They did **not take the views of the local community into account** or consider a community resource that would **meet local need** for many more people than 12 homes for social rents.

- It is ironic that Councillor Tom Hayes' statement about the **Broad Street Meadow** could so easily apply to **the Meadows in Iffley**: *'Within a year we want to be in a position to give [the meadows in Iffley] back to the people and we need to hear from everyone about how [these meadows] have met their needs. As a listening council, we want to extend our discussions with 60 local stakeholders out to the whole of the city of Oxford.'*

A listening Council is what all communities hope for. We hope that they see the communities of Iffley, Rose Hill, Donnington, local schools, mental health programmes, social ventures and wildlife groups as stakeholders in the Iffley Community Fields project.

Please listen to our two requests, which have **widespread community support**:

1. Iffley Community Fields.

Allow us to fund raise to buy **both** the Horse Field and the Memorial Field as a community asset: the "Iffley Community Fields" project, to provide **educational opportunities and promote wellbeing and regenerate this rare habitat**. We know that the Council is proposing to turn the unallocated Memorial Field into a resource for *'heavy community use'*. This would be a travesty. **Both fields** are required to ensure a **careful and sustainable balance between people and nature**.

2. Review the 2036 Local Plan

Reassess land use following **COVID** and in keeping with your declaration of **Climate Emergency**. Release and regenerate brownfield sites currently ring-fenced for employment, to build **the right homes in the right places**.

Do councillors wish for a legacy that concretes over our city irrespective of the wishes and needs of local people and of our planet? There is **ONLY ONE OXFORD** and many other groups are fighting **both individually and together for the green spaces we need and value in our City**.

Or will **you choose** to review land use in the 2036 Local Plan **and** empower the community in Iffley, to provide an inclusive and equitable resource for education and wellbeing and help to restore the natural world on which we all depend? **Thank you**.

Written Response from the Cabinet Member, Cllr Hollingsworth, read out at the meeting

The site at Meadow Lane in Iffley was allocated for housing in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 after an extensive process of development of the evidence base, repeated rounds of consultation, and an exhaustive Public Examination process. The site was proposed for allocation by its then owners, and was assessed carefully using objective criteria that were applied to all potential sites in Oxford, and was found to be suitable for careful development. The same objective processes of assessment were used by neighbouring Councils before they assigned sites in their Local Plans for housing to meet the need for new homes that could not be wholly met in Oxford; well over 50% of Oxford's unmet housing need is being provided for on sites outside Oxford, something that involves decisions for the local authorities involved that are just as difficult as for allocations in Oxford.

The land at Meadow Lane having been allocated for development the owners decided to sell it, and the successful bidder was Oxford City Homes Limited, the City Council's wholly owned housing development company. Had OCHL not been successful then a private developer would have acquired the land, and developed it themselves. While we cannot know if they would have pursued the same high environmental standards for the new homes as OCHL, or the same proportion of affordable and social housing, we do know one thing - that any profit that they would have made would have gone to private shareholders and not, as with OCHL, to support the continuation of vital front-line services for the people of Oxford. As the question makes clear, the main financial beneficiary of the allocation of the site has been the former landowner, who has sold it for £4.5m. Any return that OCHL

makes will be a fraction of that, and given the choice, I would rather that return went to the City Council to pay for services than to private shareholders of a commercial developer.

The need for new homes demonstrated in the evidence base for Oxford's Local Plan 2036 was more than double the capacity of the city to provide sites for it, even with policies to increase densities and building heights in district centres. The sole driver for that need was the need for affordable and social housing. The City Council has started work on its Local Plan 2040, and will of course be reviewing the evidence base for housing need as part of that process. But I don't believe that it is in any way plausible that the need for affordable and social housing will suddenly and inexplicably have dropped by such an extent that Oxford will be able to accommodate all its housing needs without calling on its neighbours for help. In the circumstances where other local authorities are having to make difficult decisions to allocate sites for development in their areas to meet Oxford's needs, I cannot see any justification for applying one rule for assessing a site's suitability for development in Oxford while asking for a different standard outside.

3. Address by Roger Crisp, Friends of Old Marston – development in Old Marston

Good evening, Councillors. My name is Roger Crisp, and I represent the Friends of Old Marston, a group of residents and visitors which aims to preserve the unique qualities of this village. If you don't know Old Marston already, I do hope you will come to see it. As the Council's own appraisal of the Conservation Area said in 2012, its isolation until the building of the Marston Ferry Road in the 1970s has enabled it to keep much of its green and rural character, at least as far as its surroundings and buildings go. Many old fields remain, and it has a good number of historic buildings, including several which played an important role in the Civil War.

But over the last few decades, living in our village has become increasingly dangerous, unhealthy, and unpleasant, because of the thousands of rat-running drivers who ignore the 'access only' signs. Especially during rush hours, long queues of traffic build up through the whole village. Accidents are frequent, and sometimes serious, especially to cyclists and pedestrians, who have to weave their way through cars and lorries trying to pass on the narrow pavements and roads, made narrower by parked cars as well as the chicanes, which are of course currently necessary to keep speeds down.

Given the existing traffic problems, we were surprised that the Council's 2036 Local Plan allocated land for building down one of the narrowest and most dangerous roads in Oxford, Mill Lane. As some of you will know, it is effectively single track from its junction with the main through road until a double blind bend right in the middle of the Conservation Area. We know that the County Council told the City before the plan was finalized that such building would be, as far as transport is concerned, unsustainable. At least the Local Plan did require that permission depended on its being shown that two cars could pass along Mill Lane.

Nevertheless, despite that condition's not having been met, and despite the County's view that developments here are unsustainable, the City Council's own planning committee recently voted to accept - albeit by only one vote - an application for a new estate of 159 houses at Hill View Farm.

While the case officer who presented the development to the committee had participated in meetings with the developer, we have never been properly consulted, and the developer and the committee members refused to meet us. Because of Covid, all we were offered were two short internet meetings, which many elderly and poorer people in the village could not attend. We pointed out that the development would extend by nearly a hectare into unallocated Green Belt, but were ignored. This is poor governance, and we are continuing to look into all possible avenues to protect residents, especially children, cyclists, older people, and the many disabled wheelchair and mobility scooter users from Bradlands and elsewhere.

Had we been consulted, we would have said very clearly that we do *not* object to new homes being built in Old Marston. But only homes that don't add significant traffic, are affordable, and are designed for workers in the City who currently have to commute in, especially keyworkers at local schools and hospitals.

The Council itself has now applied for permission for another estate, this time of 80 homes, again accessible only from Mill Lane. But there is *still* no transport solution. Time is running out for all of us, as the terrible flooding in Germany showed, and it is certainly running out in Old Marston. We are now appealing to you all, a newly formed Council with forward-looking ideas, to review these planning decisions on grounds of unsustainability, and to encourage the developer at Hill View Farm to put in another proposal more in line with the values of the Council and those whom it represents, as well as a public transport plan for residents which would also help those at Bradlands and make it a place people actually want to live.

The Council has a chance here to do something imaginative and positive, something which it can be proud of now rather than ashamed of in the future.

Written Response from the Cabinet Member, Cllr Hollingsworth, read out at the meeting

The address raises a number of issues that I will try to address in turn.

Following concerns raised by the County Council, planning officers worked with the applicant and the County Council to explore the options regarding two vehicles passing on Mill Lane during the life of the application. After much investigation it was accepted that the main impacts would be during the construction phase of the development and that this could be dealt with through a Construction Traffic Management Plan. As a result the County Council did NOT make an objection to the planning application as presented to the Planning Committee on 26th May 2021; a representative from County Highways attended the Committee which considered this application, and addressed at some length questions raised by members on this issue.

Clearly the COVID-19 pandemic had an effect on the applicant's ability to engage with the wider community. However Officers were satisfied that the actions taken by the applicant met the required legal standard, including engagement in writing with bodies such as Oxford Civic Society and Old Marston Parish Council. The application was accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement which sets this out in full. The Council also undertook its statutory duty of advertising the application as it was originally submitted and once it had been amended. All comments received as a result of that publicity were taken into consideration, summarised and addressed within the Committee report, including a representation from Friends of Old Marston amongst others. Members of the public also had the opportunity to address the Committee and those who took that opportunity were Friends of Old Marston, Marston Parish Council and Elsfeld Road, Oxford Road and Old Marston Resident's Association.

The report to the Planning Committee clearly set out the assessment of the impact upon the Green Belt. The development itself is contained within the application site's 'red line', including the necessary public open space provision as required by policy SP25 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The land outside the red line does not form part of the development itself, and instead provides the Green Belt compensation measures required by national and local policy. Any Green Belt compensation measures would by definition need to be off site and as the applicant owns the adjoining land, it was considered an acceptable approach. The development does not encroach onto unallocated Green Belt land, as was made clear at the Planning Committee.

The application complies with the relevant Oxford Local Plan policies in terms of the provision of affordable housing. There is no compulsion for any development under those policies to be solely for affordable housing, solely for current residents or solely keyworker housing only. Nonetheless it provides much needed housing and affordable housing at the level required under the Oxford Local Plan policies.

The application referred to at Mill Lane (ref: 21/01217/FUL) is currently being considered by planning officers. The application has been consulted on publicly in accordance with the statutory requirements, and will be reported to the Planning Committee in due course.

The Planning Committee has already resolved to grant the application at Hill View Farm planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement. There are no grounds or mechanisms to revisit that decision unless there is a material change in planning policy, which there has not been nor likely to be. The Council cannot require the applicant to resubmit another scheme.

Both of these application sites were allocating for housing in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, which underwent rigorous testing, several rounds of consultation and was then found to be sound at the Local Plan Examination, and adopted by the City Council. Contrary to the suggestion in the address, the County Council as the Highways Authority did not make a formal objection to the inclusion of these sites in the Local Plan.