

# **Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 14 July 2025**

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## **Council members present:**

Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Azad	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Fry	Councillor Gant (Sheriff)
Councillor Harley	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Miles
Councillor Max Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Munkonge	Councillor Ottino
Councillor Powell	Councillor Pressel
Councillor Railton	Councillor Qayyum
Councillor Rawle	Councillor Robinson
Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)	Councillor Sandelson
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Smowton	Councillor Stares
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Yeatman
Councillor Waite	

## **Also present for all or part of the meeting:**

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services  
Nigel Kennedy, Group Director Finance  
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Amber Khagoon, Trainee Solicitor  
Emma Griffiths, Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

## **8. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Goddard, Lygo, Jupp, Rehman, Regisford, Malik, Hunt, Mundy and Latif sent apologies.

It was noted that Councillor Yeatman, Councillor Corais and Councillor Roz Smith would be late.

## **9. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Gant noted his Cabinet role at Oxfordshire County Council in relation to items 17a and 17d. Council were informed that he would leave the meeting during discussion of those items.

## **10. Minutes**

Council resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meetings held on 24 March 2025 and the annual meeting of Council on 15 May 2025.

## **11. Appointment to Committees**

There were no new appointments to committees.

## **12. Announcements**

The Lord Mayor informed Council of events she had recently attended and noted her enjoyment of her new role. Council heard that she had recently attended a performance of the East Oxford Community Choir, met Mo Farah, accompanied the Silver Joggers, and attended a dinner at Queens College. The Lord Mayor had also met over 100 students from China at Oxford Town Hall and attended a networking event for refugees and migrants at Oxford Brooks University. Council also heard further examples.

The Sheriff also noted his enjoyment of his responsibilities and Council heard that the annual inspection of Port Meadow had been completed successfully.

The City Rector reflected on the power that speeches hold for changing history. Council heard that in Oxford in 1833, poet John Keble delivered a sermon which called on the nation to learn from the past and look to the future. The City Rector reflected on how this positively impacted communities and recommended that Council consider the value of his words.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

### **14. Positive Action Policy**

The Head of People had submitted a report regarding the Positive Action Policy. Cabinet had considered the report and recommended it to Council on 18 June 2025.

Councillor Chapman presented the report, noting that the policy is a critical tool for ensuring that under-representation across varying levels of the council is addressed. Council heard that the trade unions support this policy, and it has been integrated within current training, recruitment, and retention efforts.

Councillor Smowton queried what the Council will do to encourage representation of trans persons given the recent Equality Act ruling. Councillor Chapman emphasised that Council would continue reach out and encourage applications from persons within the trans community and will treat all applications properly and fairly. Where already employed, members of the community will be positively encouraged to take up greater responsibility.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini welcomed the addition of recommendations from the child poverty review group relating to social economic duties and the inclusion of KPIs within the policy to support target setting.

Councillor Chapman moved the report to a vote. Upon being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

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

1. **Approve** the Positive Action Policy for publication and use.

### **15. Adopt the Revised Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Director of Planning and Regulation had submitted a report regarding the changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy, and for Council to approve the amended Charging Schedule. Cabinet had considered the report and recommended it to Council on 18 June 2025.

*Councillor Henwood left the meeting.*

Councillor Hollingsworth presented the report and recommended it for approval.

Councillor Smowton requested that the rationale behind keeping use class C1 hotels on lower CIL rates, as set out in the report, be explained. Councillor Chapman explained that classifications within the report were based on what was deemed likely to be viable and successful through public inquiry processes.

*Councillor Roz Smith joined the meeting.*

Councillor Turner welcomed the report, emphasising that it is backed up by evidence and reflects the buoyancy of the market in Oxford.

*Councillor Henwood rejoined the meeting.*

Upon being seconded by Councillor Arshad, the recommendations were put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Adopt** the CIL Charging Schedule in line with the recommendation of the independent examiner as set out in Appendix 1.
2. **Approve** the date on which the amended tariffs will come into effect.
3. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Planning and Regulatory to make any necessary further minor changes to the documents or any minor change to the implementation date for the new CIL rates.

## **16. Appointment of Independent Persons**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report recommending Council appoint six Independent Persons to assist with supporting the Monitoring Officer with the Standards Process. The Standards Committee had considered the report and recommended it to Council on 3 July 2025.

Councillor Pressel presented the report and moved for it to be voted upon. Upon being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Authorise** the Monitoring Officer to re-appoint Chris Ballinger and Andrew Mills-Hicks and to appoint Eric Feltin, Lois Lezmore, Ala Soualhi and Dr. Bushra Almunir Yousef as the Council's Independent Persons for a five-year term.

## 17. Urgent Key Decisions Since March 2025

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to update Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since March 2025.

Councillor Brown presented the report.

Councillor Gant, in relation to the report on urgent decision brought to Council in January 2025, emphasised that proper scrutiny and oversight must be ensured. It was asked why further urgent decisions had since been taken, and why they could not have been taken within proper timescales to facilitate sufficient overview. Councillor Brown acknowledged the matter and explained that all three examples within this report were subject to the requirement for decisions to be taken with haste, especially that relating to local government reorganisation. In these scenarios, Council heard that it would have been impossible for normal timescales to have been observed. Councillor Turner also commented that in some circumstances, there can be significant advantages to the Council if it is able to act with unusual speed, for example in relation to property transactions.

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

## 18. Constitution Review 2025

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to seek approval to the updated Committee procedures in the relevant sections of the Constitution and further amendments to the Constitution.

Councillor Brown presented the report and commended the work of the Constitution Review Group. Council understood that an amendment had been proposed by the Green Group to clarify some wording on point 11.2.

Councillor Jarvis proposed a minor amendment in line with the spirit of the document's intentions. It was proposed that section 11.2 be altered from 'Nominated Councillors must have served at least **one full 4-year term** as a Councillor' to 'Nominated Councillors must have served at least **four full years** as a Councillor'.

Councillor Jarvis explained that the amendment was technical and aimed at ensuring that civic officer holders have a full and proper understanding of the council. Council heard the possible consequences of not agreeing this amendment. Councillor Powell, noting that he had been a member of the Constitution Review Group, seconded the amendment.

Councillor Hollingsworth questioned from what point four years from nomination date would be measured. Councillor Brown clarified that it would be from the date of taking office and Councillor Rowley explained that it would be from the date of the annual council at which persons are appointed to office.

Councillor Henwood noted his support for the amendment but raised concern that Councillor Malik has served the Council for 21 years but not been offered the position of Lord Mayor.

Council **agreed** the amendment.

Councillor Brown moved the report. Upon being seconded by Councillor Smowton, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the updates to the Constitution, as listed in Appendix 1.
2. **Delegate** authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any other consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the changes in appendix 1 to the extent that they have not been identified in the above, provided such changes are purely required as a direct consequence.

## **19. Pay Policy Statement**

The Head of People has submitted a report which asked Council to approve the pay policy.

Councillor Chapman presented the report and moved for it to be voted upon, noting that it sets out the technicalities of how staff are attracted and retained. Council heard that it was supported and agreed by the trade unions. Upon being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendation was put to a vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Agree** the pay policy.

## **20. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 April 2025**

No questions were raised.

### **b) Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 18 June 2025**

Councillor Smowton asked, in relation to the leisure review, whether more data is available to explain the year-on-year fall in visits to leisure centres. Following a discussion of the absence of this data within the minutes, Councillor Munkonge suggested that he discuss the matter with Councillor Smowton outside of the meeting.

Councillor Powell noted that the same statistics were discussed at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Munkonge explained that the first year of data is considered a baseline and next year more data would be available to provide information on performance.

### **c) Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 9 July 2025**

Councillor Morris, in relation to item 27, noted his disappointment for the reasons provided for the Council's choice not to produce a map in support of Oxford as a walkable city. It was asked whether Cabinet would reconsider the reallocation of funding for this purpose in the next budget. Councillor Railton emphasised that this would be a decision for the next budget, and not a matter to be considered within a motion.

Councillor Smowton, in relation to the Community Lettings Policy, asked the cabinet member whether current tenants are supportive of the policy, and secondly, in relation to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, whether there has been any progress made by the Council in urging central government to avoid a reduction in this. Councillor Turner explained that the Community Lettings Policy is necessary and treats all organisations in the round. Councillor Linda Smith explained that the policy only applies to new leases and does not affect existing tenants. In relation to the Homelessness Prevention Grant, Council heard that some progress has been made, and it has been learned that changes will be phased in and some mitigations will be added in response to representations made by the Council about the proposed formula.

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

26 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 11 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

*Councillor Jarvis left and rejoined the meeting during this item.*

*Councillor Corais left and rejoined the meeting during this item.*

*The Lord Mayor moved to items 16a, 16b and 16c ahead of the break.*

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

### **a) Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board/ Health Improvement Board Partnership Report**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to provide the annual report on the work of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing/Health Improvement Board.

Councillor Munkonge presented the report which outlined the actions Oxford City Council is taking to tackle health inequalities and support residents. Council heard that the matter is complex, but that Councillor Munkonge is proud of the ongoing partnership work with Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini asked how local government work on health and wellbeing will be scrutinised given a recent report from national government that notes relevant organisations disappearing. It was also asked whether representations will be made to central government on this issue. Councillor Munkonge recognised the importance of the question and committed to raising it at the next board meeting.

Councillor Robinson asked whether gardening and community allotments had been considered as gentle means of activity to improve health and wellbeing. Council also heard of the connection of this with food and nutrition understanding. Councillor Munkonge appreciated the recommendation and committed to adding it to the report.

Council resolved to **note** the annual report of the work the City Council does to support the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board and the Health Improvement Board.



**b) Annual Scrutiny Report 2024-2025**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted a report to Council to provide a summary of the Scrutiny function during the 2024/2025 municipal year.

Councillor Miles, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025, presented the report, noting that the Committee's discussions took place across a challenging landscape in the last year which further emphasised the importance of the scrutiny function and its delicate balance. Council heard that across the year the Committee made 96 recommendations to Cabinet; 59 of which were accepted in full. Councillor Miles noted that members of the Committee were encouraged that its views were embraced, and its role valued, and she noted her happiness that, despite political differences, members united and worked towards shared goals and values. Councillor Miles thanked officers and members and handed over to Councillor Powell as the new chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Council resolved to **note** the update report.

**c) Scrutiny Committee update report**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted a report to update Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since March 2025.

Councillor Powell presented the report, noting that it applies to activities dated between 13 March 2025 and 11 July 2025. Council heard that the Scrutiny Committee met for the first time in the new Council year on 10 June and agreed the Committee's operating principles, established 3 working groups, and reconstituted the Budget Review Group. Council also heard that the Committee's operating principles were recommended to Council for formal amalgamation into the Constitution. Councillor Powell also noted that the Committee has made 19 recommendations across its meetings so far relating to topics such as leisure, the Oxford local Plan 2042, and homelessness. Further examples of matters discussed were also detailed.

Council resolved to **note** the update report.

*The meeting broke for 45 minutes at the conclusion of this item.*

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

*Councillor Yeatman joined the meeting during the break.*

*Councillor Gant, in line with his earlier declared interest, left the meeting and did not return.*

*The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizen's Services, the Group Finance Director, and the Trainee Solicitor left the meeting and did not return following the break.*

Lord Mayor noted that member of the public who raised a question was not in attendance but that the response would be published in the minutes.

Council heard 3 addresses and Cabinet members responded.

All addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

## **24. Motions on notice July 2025**

Council had before it 5 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

### **Motions agreed as set out below:**

- a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum)

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

- b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)
- c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis)
- d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad)
- e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)

**a) Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme (Proposed by Councillor James Taylor, Seconded by Councillor Asima Qayyum)**

Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Qayyum, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

Councillor Henwood proposed an amendment to the motion, as set out in the briefing note and was seconded by Councillor Stares.

Following the debate and on being put to the vote, the amendment **fell**.

Following the debate and on being put to a vote, the unamended motion **carried**.

**Council resolved to:**

- **Express** its' opposition to the congestion charge scheme proposed by the county council

**b) Ban Smartphones in Oxford Schools (Proposed by Councillor Katherine Miles, Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant)**

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

**c) Protecting trans peoples' access to services (Proposed by Councillor Alex Powell, Seconded by Councillor Chris Jarvis)**

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

**d) Keep Oxfordshire's street lights on (Proposed by Councillor Susan Brown, Seconded by Councillor Lubna Arshad)**

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

**e) Environmental Protections in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Andrew Gant, Seconded by Councillor Chris Smowton)**

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

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm**

**Lord Mayor .....  
2025**

**Date: Monday 6 October**

*Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:  
Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision  
and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.  
Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

**To:** Council  
**Date:** 14 July 2025  
**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy  
**Title of Report:** Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

## **Introduction**

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

Responses are included where available.

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

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

Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

## Questions and responses

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

### SB1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown

#### Question

Oxford is home to a large number of trans, queer and non-binary people who will be understandably anxious after the judgment of the UK Supreme Court in For Women Scotland. Can the portfolio member please confirm that Oxford City Council remains fully committed to providing trans and non-binary people with public services and amenities that are appropriate to their chosen gender and which ensure that trans and non-binary people in our city are in all cases treated with dignity and respect?

#### Written Response

The Council remains fully committed to providing services to everyone, respecting trans and non-binary people in line with their chosen gender. We must treat all our citizens with dignity and respect. We will need to deliver services in line with the law and are awaiting the EHRC formal guidance on this matter to be agreed and published. However, we do not anticipate the change to the legal definition of sex under the Equality Act to change our commitment to inclusion for all groups.

#### Supplementary Question

Councillor Powell asked whether it could be confirmed that that once the EHRC Code of Practice is published, whether consideration will be given within the authority's response to the need not to force trans persons into using amenities that do not reflect their lived gender.

#### Verbal Response

Councillor Brown explained that the guidance is still awaited but that efforts would be made to ensure that all persons are treated with respect.

### SB2: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown

<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>I was pleased to see the announcement of proposals for a Greater Oxford Unitary authority. However, many residents may be concerned about the expansion of the city region into the Green Belt. Will the leader take this opportunity to put on record the commitment of City Council and the broader proposal to protecting green spaces and ensuring sustainability?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Firstly, it is important to say that green spaces and Green Belt are not synonymous, some areas of Green Belt are very much not green and have already been developed, often in a poorly planned way.</p> <p>Our commitment is clear; a Greater Oxford would deliver the homes this city and its citizens need, and we would do this as close to the city as possible, rather than dispersed across the whole county, which forces more commuting and car-dependency. Inevitably, to do this we will need to carefully release areas of Green Belt.</p> <p>It would be wrong to speculate where these areas might be at this point, but we would ensure that there is a robust evidence-base and rigorous public consultation before any release could go ahead. It will be a priority to ensure sites have excellent links into the city through sustainable transport modes.</p> <p>Critically we will ensure that new developments provide high levels of accessible green space on site as well as making significant contributions to creating new (and improving existing) access to green spaces, such as country parks.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>No Supplementary Question.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

**ET1: From Cllr Smowton to Turner****Question**

In February Council accepted the Labour budget amendment that substantially integrated Lib Dem proposals as follows (considering year 1 only)--

1. Add a homelessness prevention officer
2. Add a planning enforcement officer
3. Introduce a fund supporting pavement and other walkability works
4. Development of a city centre play space
5. Development of smart parking charges (e.g., weight or emission dependent)

Could you please update Council as to how these have progressed to date?

**Written Response**

1) The Homelessness Prevention Officer has now been recruited. They are working in the Early Intervention section of the Homelessness Prevention team, working with clients to sustain accommodation and to help people to move ahead of eviction to avoid homelessness.

2) The additional planning enforcement officer is being recruited to, with the application window recently closed and interviews pending.

3) ODS are identifying locations where previous requests have been made for provision of works to aid accessibility for pedestrians with restricted mobility and wheelchair users which it has not been possible to address due to the lack of budget. Once this information is available the works will be prioritised for use of the budget available in 2025/6 and budget identified for the following year.

4) The concept of a city centre playground is being piloted through a series of pop-up children's events throughout summer 2025. City and County officers meet weekly to assess the success of these pop-ups and gather key insights. Following the conclusion of the events, a comprehensive review will be conducted to evaluate potential sites for permanent play spaces within the city.

5) A wider piece of advice has been commissioned initially on the car park portfolio to ensure the service offers value for money. A review of parking charges will form part of this but it is likely that work will commence on the parking charges specifically next calendar year.

**Supplementary Question**

No Supplementary Question.

**Verbal Response**



## ET2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner

### Question

The Oxford mail reported that £10,932,486.09 is owed back to residents who have or continue to pay council tax to the city. How is this data broken down by year?

### Written Response

<b>COUNCIL TAX</b>	
Year	31/05/2025
2007	£11,618.72
2008	£14,302.27
2009	£25,985.24
2010	£30,970.99
2011	£43,450.07
2012	£72,409.11
2013	£81,589.95
2014	£112,334.07
2015	£142,956.94
2016	£148,320.58
2017	£213,939.78
2018	£293,845.59
2019	£381,444.19
2020	£521,908.69
2021	£980,335.85
2022	£1,461,891.96
2023	£2,162,932.43
2024	£4,232,249.66
	<b>£10,932,486.09</b>

### Supplementary Question

Noting the amount of money owed back to the Council, Councillor Miles asked how long it would typically take

### Verbal Response

Councillor Turner noted the existing figures as unsurprising based on historical trends and explained that it has also likely been driven by the pandemic period. Council was assured that as much is done as possible to collect the owed money in accordance with policy but that safeguards are

to reduce this amount to less than half a million pounds.	also ensured to protect vulnerable persons. Councillor Turner committed to discussing this further with Councillor Miles outside of the meeting if requested.
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<b>ET3: From Cllr Miles to Turner</b>	
<b>Question</b> Is this council willing to waiver or reduce the fee for regular street closures for children's playing out sessions in the city?	<b>Written Response</b> Oxford City Council supports the Oxford Civic Society's Street for People Initiative that encourages local people to use their street to play in and interact with neighbours. The Council's road closure fee for street parties is £19, covering the administrative process and statutory consultation. This fee is currently applied to street closures for children's playing out sessions, which are often an element of community-led street parties. If a ward member feels this fee cannot be afforded, it might be a good use for ward member funds.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

#### ET4: From Cllr Miles to Turner

##### Question

What has been the annual budget and team size for the environmental health team at the city council over the last 5 years broken down by year?

##### Written Response

										Budgeted	Budgeted
Cost centre	Gross Spend	Net	Gross Spend	Net	Gross Spend	Net	Gross Spend	Net	Gross Spend	Gross Spend	Net
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26		
Business Regulation	511	261	443	249	483	278	486	272	557	314	
Private sector safety	324	311	122	75	107	65	126	129	143	142	
HMO Enforcement	363	394	382	344	372	325	443	387	426	389	
HMO Licencing	219	-598	193	-571	191	-609	231	-473	195	-577	
TOTAL	1,417	368	1,140	97	1,153	59	1,286	315	1,321	268	

FTEs in Cost centre	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
ED16 Business Regualtions	10.7	9.5	9.7	10.1	10.1
ED17 Private Sector Safety	9.0	9.8	3.0	3.0	4.0
ED18 HMO Enforcement	8.4	8.6	8.5	8.5	7.8
ED22 HMO Licensing	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>27.9</b>

##### Supplementary Question

Councillor Miles, noting the reduction in the number of staff employed within the environmental health team, asked what issues had caused this.

##### Verbal Response

Councillor Turner noted ringfencing of expenditure in relation to licensing work. Councillor Linda Smith further explained that it is also hard to recruit Environmental Health officers across the country. Council heard the positive news that three new officers have recently been recruited to build this team back up.

#### ET5: From Cllr R Smith to Turner

<b>Question</b> We note that the City council plans to increase its CIL on labs and office space, and while this is not yet agreed, would request that some funds are earmarked for a city centre playground or playgrounds given that these jobs are likely to attract working families	<b>Written Response</b> Should the increase in the CIL schedule be agreed at Council, then the new rate will apply to schemes determined after August 15 <sup>th</sup> . The additional income from the levy increase will take a few years to be filter through to increased income. After that, it will be for full council to take decisions on spend, not me as portfolio holder, and of course there are likely to be many competing priorities, including this (excellent) suggestion.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Roz Smith asked whether the Cabinet member would support the suggestion of having more playground space within the city.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Turner noted his support for playgrounds and recognised the importance of both providing and maintaining these facilities. Councillor Turner also emphasised that there are many pulls on CIL funding and it is a decision for all of Council to set the budget which includes provision for playgrounds.

<b>ET6: From Cllr Fouweather to Turner</b>													
<b>Question</b> Can the Cabinet Member give a current financial statement on the amounts held by the Council resulting from S106 and CIL agreements with developers? Specifically, the amounts held and allocated to specific projects in this financial year, held and allocated for specific projects in future financial years and held but currently unallocated to any projects?	<b>Written Response</b> This information is usually published as part of our annual Infrastructure Funding Statement which comes to Cabinet and Council around December each year. However, I have asked officers to give a high-level summary now in order to answer this question, with detail to follow in the IFS. £13,975,756 of S106 contributions are currently held and are to be used towards the following: <table> <tr> <td>Affordable Housing</td><td>£12,166,478</td></tr> <tr> <td>Community Facilities and Health</td><td>£403,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Environmental/Economic</td><td>£267,611</td></tr> <tr> <td>Transport</td><td>£227,036</td></tr> <tr> <td>Open space/Leisure</td><td>£867,678</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other</td><td>£43,953</td></tr> </table> As S106 requests must be project specific there are no unallocated amounts.	Affordable Housing	£12,166,478	Community Facilities and Health	£403,000	Environmental/Economic	£267,611	Transport	£227,036	Open space/Leisure	£867,678	Other	£43,953
Affordable Housing	£12,166,478												
Community Facilities and Health	£403,000												
Environmental/Economic	£267,611												
Transport	£227,036												
Open space/Leisure	£867,678												
Other	£43,953												

	<p>The CIL balance at the end of 24/25 was £11,961,367 the allocations for which are:</p> <p>Strategic Capital Programme Projects £8,381,983</p> <p>Oxford North transport improvements £2,227,803</p> <p>Neighbourhood CIL portion £1,138,024</p> <p>This leaves £244,147 currently unallocated, although there are a number of capital projects currently under consideration.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

### Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford; Deputy Leader of the Council

<b>AR1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> We congratulate the City council on the success of the pop up play space scheme. Could the member please clarify how this moves the scheme forward to a permanent solution and what the ETA might be?	<b>Written Response</b> By the end of the summer 2025, the pop ups will have completed. A review will then take place, to consider locations of permanent play spaces in the city. Additionally, the City Centre Manager will encourage developers to also consider the public realm outside spaces that they have under development.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AR2: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>

I congratulate the City council on the success of the pop up play space scheme and its collaboration with the county council to achieve this, but could the portfolio holder please detail the collaboration ongoing with the county to find a more permanent location for the playground?	City and County meet once a week to review the success of the pop ups and identify key learnings. At the end of the pop ups a review will take place, to consider locations of permanent play spaces in the city. Additionally, the City Centre Manager will encourage developers to also consider the public realm outside spaces that they have under development.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**AR3: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Railton****Question**

□□ In the most recent budget, the city council allocated funds to develop the idea of a city centre playground. Could the cabinet member please detail the progress of that spend to date or the plan to spend it with a view to accelerating the project?

**Written Response**

The concept of a city centre playground is being piloted through a series of pop-up children's events throughout summer 2025. City and County officers meet weekly to assess the success of these pop-ups and gather key insights. Following the conclusion of the events, a comprehensive review will be conducted to evaluate potential sites for permanent play spaces within the city.

At this stage, the allocated funds remain unused. After the review, careful consideration will be given to the best way to utilise the funding - whether to build a new playground, commission consultants to identify the optimal locations, or invest in upgrading an existing area.

**Supplementary Question**

No Supplementary Question.

**Verbal Response****Cabinet Member for a Safer Oxford****LA1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad****Question**

I, like many other residents, was shocked at the high-speed crash in Morrell Avenue in late May. This collision arises from a long history of dangerous speeding in the Avenue. Does the portfolio holder agree with me that Oxfordshire County Council and

**Written Response**

Thank for you raising this issue. I too am shocked at the speeds some vehicles travel at in the city. I would also like to commend the work of the local resident's Speedwatch group in addressing speeding in this area. I will be contacting the police to ask for their assessment of speeding in the Morrell Avenue area and the suitability of a speed camera in the location.

Thames Valley police need to urgently work together to ensure a speed camera is added to the avenue?	
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Councillor Powell asked whether the Cabinet member would encourage the police and Oxfordshire County Council to meet and undertake the necessary work for responding to the needs of residents who have been dealing with the matter for a long time.	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Councillor Arshad explained that the police are the first point of contact for any relevant assessment and, if necessary, the Highways Authority would be then engaged in the process.



## Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

### NC1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Chapman

#### Question

Can the Cabinet Member explain how many temporary or agency staff are currently employed by the Council? Can he also provide the same information for consultants currently working for the Council on a contract basis either on a fixed term or extendable basis?

#### Written Response

Current records at 3 July show that the Council has 53 temporary agency staff and 2 consultants out of approximately 850 staff overall. Temporary Agency staff are used where we need to cover vacancies that are difficult to fill or to support with surges in demand. Currently, the largest proportion of roles being covered are specialists in Property, Law and Information Technology. These are fields where we have struggled to recruit for a long time. In addition, there are roles in Housing with short-term funding, niche roles such as in Ecology and temporary Project Manager roles.

#### Supplementary Question

No Supplementary Question.

#### Verbal Response

### NC2: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Chapman

#### Question

Can the portfolio holder outline the council's policy on glyphosate use on residential streets and pavements and how many incidences of its use there have been in the last 12 months?

#### Written Response

The Council has a clear policy on the use of glyphosate-based weedkillers, which was agreed after a thorough review in the autumn of 2023.

The review, which looked at other Council practices, medical evidence, and the state of regulation for glyphosate products, found that deploying these weedkillers was by far the most efficient and cost effective of tackling the City's weeds on hard surfaces like roads, pavements, and tennis courts, and of combatting Japanese Knotweed and other pernicious shrubs.

ODS uses well trained and experienced contractors, and the application is by "targeted droplets" rather than mass spraying. The public are warned if

	<p>glyphosate weedkillers are being used in an area. Treatments are not applied when conditions are windy.</p> <p>The products continue to be licenced for use in the EU, the USA and here in the UK.</p> <p>Weed treatments are typically carried out three times per year. The first round will usually begin in March, the second treatment in June, and the final round being conducted towards the end of August. There may be a slight variance in treatment times depending on weather conditions.</p> <p>In the last 12 months we undertook treatments in April 24, August 24, and April 25. We have just finalised the second round of treatments in July and the final round will be undertaken by September 25.</p> <p>We have promised to look again at our use of these weedkillers if new evidence emerges to challenge the findings of our last review.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Muddiman noted disappointment in hearing that the Council continues to use glyphosate despite its negative impacts and long-term consequences. As residents have not been warned, it was asked whether the Council would agree to reviewing the warning processes in place for warning residents on the understanding that it is not currently working.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Chapman emphasised that glyphosate is approved by the WHO and the EU and is broadly used across many countries. As such, it was recommended that considerations of its impacts are realistically.</p>

<b>NC3: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Can the portfolio holder outline how road cleaners currently manage kerbside cleaning around parked</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p>

cars on streets, given how parked cars can inhibit the cleaning process? Are there steps that can be taken to improve this?	ODS have no legal powers to enforce parking restrictions so our sweepers work around parked vehicles as they can. This is apart from areas targeted for deep cleaning, where it was agreed that ODS would trial signs and advance notices on lamp posts to advise residents in good time of upcoming work.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**AH1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

The Museum of Oxford trustees have expressed concern that the latest City Council budget has left them facing unrealistic revenue and/or cost-cutting targets for this year. Will you work with them to (a) provide whatever support the council is able to help them improve their financial position, or (b) if necessary put the case for an in-year budget bid to ensure they are able to sustain their valuable cultural offer?

**Written Response**

The Museum of Oxford is a service run by Oxford City Council, not by a separate organisation. This has been the case since the late 1990s when the City Council took over running the museum from the Oxfordshire County Museums Service.

As with all Council run museums in the UK, financial pressures mean that the service needs to both be offering a service to local people and covering at least some of its costs from visitors and from donors. That responsibility falls on Oxford City Council, as the organisation that both hosts and runs the Museum.

The Museum of Oxford Development Trust is a charitable organisation whose aim as set out on the Charity Commission record is to "raise funds for the development and continued support of the Museum of Oxford"; in other words, not to run the Museum itself. It has raised money from various funding bodies, and makes contributions in line with its charitable objectives to the Museum of Oxford.

The Charity Commission data for the Museum of Oxford Development Trust's most recent financial report for the year ending 31 July 2024 has a total income of £106,546 and total expenditure of £21,010.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Smowton asked whether the Cabinet member recognises the Museum Development Trust's message that the years' budget is unlikely to be

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Hollingsworth explained that targets were set by this Council as part of the budget earlier in the year and the challenge of meeting financial

sufficient and asked what the Council intends to do about this.	targets is shared by all local councils across the country. It was explained that the intention is to monitor the situation.
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<b>AH2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> In addition to the Local Plan's ordinary Call for Sites process which primarily targets medium-to-large sites, does or will the council proactively engage with SME developers that could bring forward small (less than 10 unit) sites in order to encourage such sites' contribution to our housing need?	<b>Written Response</b> <p>The Call for Sites process looks for all development opportunities; as the Call for Sites documentation says, "there is no minimum (or maximum) size of site" being called for.</p> <p>The Housing Land Availability Assessment and then the Local Plan processes assess and then allocate specific larger housing sites of 10 or more homes. They also encourage housing to come forward on smaller sites and the Local Plan has a suite of policies to encourage this. Officers take care to promote the Local Plan and the Call for Sites extensively and have a range of virtual and in person drop-in sessions open to all landowners and developers.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH3: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Could Cllr Hollingsworth update council on progress of the feasibility study into a possible Business Improvement District for Oxford? BIDs are a well-established tool for managing and improving urban centres in partnership with local stakeholders, and have been successfully in operation in many historic	<b>Written Response</b> The question conflates two slightly separate things. A Business Improvement District (BID) is something which covers all businesses in a designated area. The project that began in 2024 which was to support work by the accommodation businesses and providers on a possible Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID), which covers all

towns for many years, including elsewhere in Oxfordshire. The idea was first considered by this council as far back as 2008, and the current administration agreed to start work on a feasibility study almost a year ago, on 23 July 2024. What progress has been made, and when can we expect a decision and potential action to flow from that process?

businesses of a specific type in a designated area. Similar names, but different things. What they do have in common is that the decision to create one or not does NOT sit with the City Council, but the businesses and organisations that would be impacted by it.

Since last summer Oxford City Council has been working closely with accommodation providers such as hotels and colleges to assess the impact of tourism and explore potential funding through an Accommodation Business Improvement District.

An initial feasibility study, along with an independent report by The Mosaic Partnership, was completed in December 2024. The findings indicated a tentative interest in establishing an ABID, though several significant concerns were raised by visitor accommodation providers. Since then, efforts have focused on addressing these concerns, with a strong emphasis on building trust and fostering relationships with accommodation providers.

Given the extensive challenges that the hospitality sector has been facing in 2025, without this groundwork there would be a risk of any ballot being held rejecting the idea of an ABID. This scenario is not unique and many other towns and cities have faced similar challenges and have extended the process to allow for thorough stakeholder engagement.

The Council is now advancing to the next phase of the project with support from a consultant. Separate Task Groups for hotels and colleges will be established to evaluate the impact of tourism and identify potential projects. These groups will also explore funding options and determine whether an ABID ballot is likely to be successful.

Funding for officer time and the consultant has been allocated through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

	It is important to understand that the Council will have no direct influence over whether any options are pursued; the final decisions, including how any funds raised are allocated, rest entirely with the levy payers.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Councillor Gant asked if the Cabinet member believes the ABID to be a good idea for Oxford.	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Councillor Hollingsworth explained that the decision to move forward with the ABID could take place without the involvement of the Council as it is led by a group of private businesses. It was noted that the ABID is viewed as a good idea for Oxford as it is an opportunity to raise money and new ideas. Other case studies across the country were noted such as Liverpool and Manchester. Councillor Hollingsworth noted that the ABID could help improve the positive experience for all in Oxford.

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<b>AH4: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Last December the Jericho Wharf Trust made a request to the Council for Compulsory Purchase action on a site that has now been derelict for 20 years. The Hong Kong landowner's latest proposals are to sell the land for development of up to 230 student flats, without delivering any of the established planning policies for the site which specify a new community centre and repair boatyard facilities as well as housing and affordable housing. What is the Council's latest position on Jericho Wharf?	<b>Written Response</b>  The City Council's planning policy for this site is set out in the Local Plan 2036, and has not changed. Any application received has to be determined on its merits by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority through the planning process, as set out in legislation.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**AH5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth****Question**

Surveys have consistently identified around 400 local boats which should be taken out of the water every 4 years for inspection and essential maintenance of their hulls.

This is essential maintenance to keep boats safe and in a good state of repair. However, there is currently nowhere to do this in Oxford. Will the Council support local boaters by using their compulsory purchase powers to buy Jericho Wharf where space could be provided for essential boat repair facilities?

**Written Response**

The Council has been working with the Jericho Wharf Trust for many years to bring forward the Jericho Wharf site, and I share their frustration that the site has not yet been developed for the long overdue community facilities needed.

While the City Council will remain open to using CPO powers to ensure development of the site it is important to understand that the process is inherently risky and very expensive. Initiating a CPO that fails to succeed will use up substantial amounts of public money as abortive costs to the Council, taking funds away from other much needed schemes and making no difference to this site.

If the landowner comes forward with another planning application now and secures permission, then the clear legal advice received by the Council is that a CPO would be highly unlikely to succeed.

Therefore, the Council's position is that we need to understand very clearly the current position of the landowner. To this end the City Council is facilitating a meeting between the landowner and the Jericho Wharf Trust later this summer.

After this meeting the Council will continue to review its position and act accordingly.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Muddiman asked whether a date had been set for the meeting, and if not, when would it be arranged.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Hollingsworth confirmed that a private meeting has been arranged this summer, but it would not be appropriate to disclose further information.



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

Will the Council use its powers to compulsory purchase Jericho Wharf and if so, how long would the process take?

**Written Response**

The process for a CPO would likely take a number of years. It is notoriously hard to predict timeframes and will be dependent on a wide range of external factors. Timing will not be in the control of the City Council as the applicant.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Muddiman asked if the Council would consider interim steps to help the community affected.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Hollingsworth explained that the Council has no ownership or access to this site or anything similar that could be offered as a replacement. Therefore, it would be unlikely that additional support could be provided by this authority, but the importance of the matter was noted.

## Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion

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<b>CM1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> Headington area schools complain of needing to transport children back and forth to leisure centres across the city when Barton Leisure Centre would be a manageable walk. In order to save time, money and transport emissions, will you do your utmost to ensure slots are made available for all schools to use their nearest centre?	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Children being able to swim 25 metres before they leave primary school is a key priority for Oxford City Council. The importance of this priority is also supported by More Leisure the Council's leisure operator.</p> <p>More Leisure have confirmed that there are several schools within the Headington area that are using Barton Leisure Centre and don't seem to have a record of any unsuccessful approach. If there are schools from the local area who are interested please do get in touch with <a href="mailto:Christopher.hawkes@serco.com">Christopher.hawkes@serco.com</a> or alternatively speak to James Baughan or Hagan Lewisman who are the relevant Council officers.</p> <p>In tandem with this More Leisure will pro-actively reach out to local schools in each leisure centre local area.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>CM2: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> Will the portfolio holder undertake to work with the leisure provider to ensure that the trans and non-binary residents of and visitors to our city continue to be treated with dignity in the provision of leisure services within Oxford City, following the judgment of the UK	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Yes we are committed to working with the leisure provider to ensure that all visitors to our leisure centres are treated with dignity and respect. The leisure industries UK Active organisation is due to provide some guidance in this area shortly.</p>

Supreme Court in For Women Scotland and the associated EHRC draft Code of Practice, which has understandably generated significant anxieties?	
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Councillor Powell asked whether once the leisure provider has had the guidance put into the code of practice, the Cabinet member could report back on any policy amendments being made.	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Councillor Munkonge committed to doing so.

## Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

35

<b>LS1: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> What reassurances can the portfolio holder give to residents that social housing enquiries are working effectively, given the death in Plowman Towers in April which was not discovered for over a month, even after neighbours had repeatedly reported the smell? Can the portfolio holder reassure residents that the housing tenancy portals and communications are working as intended?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council's Contact Centre received four calls from two residents in late March complaining that there was a smell near the bin chute area. Blocked bin chutes are not an uncommon occurrence. An order was raised to clear the bin chutes and one of the residents confirmed that the smell had dissipated. A visit to a neighbouring property the following week presented no smell in the area. I am satisfied that the enquiries made were properly recorded and followed up with actions by officers. It is not believed that the smell present in late March were connected with the death of the tenant. Some three weeks later, on 22nd April, an ODS Operative was concerned about another smell and promptly called Thames Valley Police who forced entry.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No Supplementary Question.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

## Chair of the Planning Committee – Oxford City Planning Committee

### MC1: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Clarkson

#### Question

Could you provide clarity on why proposals for Meadow Lane Car Park have not yet been brought to Planning Committee, particularly when the call-in was requested in March 2024 and could you outline when proposals for Meadow Lane Car Park will be brought to Planning Committee?

#### Written Response

Officers have been working with the applicant to resolve outstanding objections from the Local Highways Authority in relation to the application. It would appear that this is close to being resolved, and as such officers are looking to take this to committee in either August or September.

#### Supplementary Question

No Supplementary Question.

#### Verbal Response

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## Chair of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee

### KM1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Miles

#### Question

During the meeting of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee on 21 May 2025, the committee elected not to pass a Special Saturation Policy. Instead pausing the special saturation policy pending more evidence. As a councillor representing Cowley Road, this is a matter of real concern. Can the chair please outline what actions are open to councillors to have an interim policy in place while further work is carried out?

#### Written Response

There is currently no legal provision for implementing an 'interim' Special Saturation Policy under the Licensing Act 2003, just as there was no provision to 'pause' the policy whilst more discussions could occur. At the meeting on 21 May 2025, the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee resolved not to adopt the proposed policy. Instead, the committee requested that officers bring forward a revised recommendation in September 2025, which may include the original proposal.

**Supplementary Question**

No Supplementary Question.

**Verbal Response**

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**To:** Council

**Date:** 14 July 2025

**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

**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 will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

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

1. Question from Naomi Gann
2. Address from Richard Parnham
3. Address from Jack Abraham
4. Address from Kaddy Beck

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

### 1. Question from Naomi Gann

I am from ACORN, a community union representing tenants. Members of our union here in Oxford have been victims of illegal behaviour from landlords. They've been made to live in dangerous homes and had their complaints ignored, and have also been harassed and revenge-evicted. The experience of our members is reflected in research by housing charity Shelter, which found that 45% of renters in the South East are victims of illegal behaviour from landlords. So we are really concerned that Oxford City Council has only prosecuted 1 landlord in the past five years. Why won't you take a zero tolerance approach to rogue landlords, and commit to increasing prosecutions?

## **Response from Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities**

We take renters rights extremely seriously and are dedicated to improving housing conditions for our citizens. That's why in 2022 we introduced the most comprehensive private rented sector licensing scheme in the country and we are committed to using the scheme to drive up standards in the sector.

We use a range of enforcement actions and interventions to get hazards removed from rental properties. Oxford City Council intervenes in 100% of cases where Category 1 or high Category 2 hazards are identified. Each case is assessed individually, and enforcement action is tailored based on the nature of the hazard, the vulnerability of the occupants, the landlord's responsiveness, and the most effective route to achieve compliance. Our goal is always the same: to remove hazards as quickly and effectively as possible — not to apply a one-size-fits-all approach.

Our enforcement practice is guided by the Regulators' Code, a statutory framework that all local authorities are legally required to consider. The Code requires us to act proportionately, provide clear information, and offer landlords a chance to resolve issues before taking formal action — unless there is immediate risk or evidence of non-compliance. Automatically issuing Improvement Notices in all cases, as proposed by Acorn, would conflict with this national standard.

In most cases, a Schedule of Works is our first step — and often the quickest way to get hazards fixed. It outlines what repairs are needed and by when and frequently secures prompt action from landlords who are willing to comply. If deadlines are missed, we escalate and serve an Improvement Notice. Schedules of Works are not currently included in our published enforcement data, but we are working with our data team to compile and publish this information in future.

Improvement Notices are used when necessary — particularly if landlords delay, are uncooperative, or the risk to tenants is significant. However, when hazards are already being addressed and tenants are not in danger, formal notices may be disproportionate and could delay the resolution of issues.

Hazard Awareness Notices are used in specific circumstances — such as in owner-occupied properties, cases of overcrowding from family growth, or where building listing restricts repair options. We do not use them where repairs are required.

If a property is a licensed HMO, then we will add conditions to the licence to require repair works as this is a permitted alternative route for resolution. This route has a 75% compliance rate.

Under the current legislation, it is not a permitted route to add repair work conditions to Selective Licences. The Renters Rights Bill seeks to address this difference and proposes to alter the legislation to allow conditions to be added to Selective Licences for repair work. We welcome and support this change to align both licensing schemes to improve property conditions in the rented sector.

We penalise cases of non-compliance through the application of higher licence fees, shorter licences and financial penalties. Prosecution is reserved for the most serious offences. Just last week, we were successful in prosecuting a landlord for failing to



comply with HMO licence conditions.

We are committed to protecting private renters and using the full range of enforcement tools available to us. Our whole Oxford selective licensing scheme goes further than any other council in the UK and requires all privately rented homes to be managed by a fit and proper person, which is a zero-tolerance approach to rogue landlords.

The success of a licencing scheme, and improvements to peoples living conditions, cannot be measured simply by the number of prosecutions that a council makes and we will judge our success on the future improvements we expect to see in the quality of Oxford's rented homes, not on the number of landlords ending up in the dock.

## **2. Address from Richard Parnham**

I'm here today to speak in favour of council motion 17a "Oppose the County Council Congestion Charge Scheme". In fact, I don't think you should just "resolve" to oppose the congestion charge, I think you should go further. Perhaps even consider legal action against Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for dreaming up a scheme that, objective, bonkers.

Let me give you a few examples of why I regard the congestion charge plan as bonkers. If you were out walking near the Plain just two-three weeks ago during the morning rush hour, you'd see that Iffley Road was rammed with cars as far as the eye could see<sup>1</sup>. By contrast, St Clements was busy (ish), but fundamentally free flowing<sup>2</sup>. So which road is OCC proposing to put a £5 congestion charge on? St Clements obviously<sup>3</sup>, not Iffley Road. The quieter road, not the busier one.

And it's a similar picture up in Marston. During the morning rush hour, traffic flows freely on Marson Ferry Road<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, the nearby Marsh Lane – a residential road – is absolutely rammed<sup>5</sup>. So which road gets the congestion charge camera? Marston Ferry Road, obviously. And, to make matters worse, the already busy Marsh Lane is predicted to get hundreds of more cars a day as result<sup>6</sup>, according to OCC modelling data.

And, to top it off, a safety report produced by OCC as part of the related traffic filters scheme, predicts "shunts, pedestrian trips and falls or pedestrian / vehicle collisions" are likely to occur outside the Swan School as a direct result of this scheme being introduced<sup>7</sup>. (Not so) fun fact: the officers' recommendation to move the camera site was overruled. So much for vision zero.

It gets crazier. If you walk along St Cross Road during the morning rush hour<sup>8</sup>, even during term time<sup>9</sup>, the road is practically empty. Despite a lack of any objective justification for a congestion charge on this road, it's getting one anyway. A quiet road getting quieter. Again.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1939947119873274232>

<sup>2</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1933061016436306233>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/connecting-oxfordshire/temporary-congestion-charge>

<sup>4</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1935243498648748411>

<sup>5</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1937407180895850969>

<sup>6</sup> Ricardo. Oxford Traffic Filters Interim Scheme, 13 June. Table 3.1.

<sup>7</sup> Oxfordshire County Council. Road Safety Audit response for RSA Stage 1 (DMRB GG119). 18 August 2022. Available [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1942128932322509056>

<sup>9</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/19326974914305917312>

Not that you'd know that from the Ricardo report, which failed to include this key congestion charge location in its modelling report. Oops.

If displaced traffic from the (non-residential) St Cross Road and Marston Ferry Road ripples out to cause extra congestion and pollution at the top of the already busy Woodstock and Banbury Roads<sup>10</sup>, then bad luck to those who live there. The university district gets even clearer air: residents in the outer suburbs don't, across both North and East Oxford<sup>11</sup>. How very gown versus town.

This, then, is the insanity of a transport policy that is wilfully blind to the evidence staring it in the face.

Now imagine an alternative reality, where facts drive policy responses.

In that magical reality, someone at OCC would have realised that morning traffic jams on Iffley Road traffic evaporate the moment the private – not state schools – go on holiday<sup>12</sup>. If councillor officers would finally recognise this obvious fact, then maybe a targeted intervention, involving private school traffic, might be trialled. Maybe open up park and rides to become school bus pick-up and dropping off points – which what they're designed to do anyway? A simple idea, which OCC is only now vaguely pondering. Why wasn't this idea trialled first, at practically no cost to anyone?

Likewise, if everyone acknowledged that hospitals were likely to be a significant source of traffic in outer Oxford<sup>13</sup>, maybe we could do something about it? Maybe a car park could be built along the A40 near Barton Park, with a shuttle bus provided to the hospital through the "secret"<sup>14</sup> bus gate linking the A40 with Meadon Hill in Northway? If it's quick and easy to hop on a shuttle bus to the JR from a new car park at Barton Park, why wouldn't you? Carrots, not sticks.

Maybe also try to persuade Oxford's main hospitals to spread out their clinic days, so hundreds of outpatients aren't trying to get to the same location on the same day. Really, really, simple ideas to trial. But no.

But, of course, this is all just crazy talk. Because what's driving this whole proposal is not a plan to fix actual congestion hotspots, or to propose solutions that are likely to make tangible difference.

Instead the congestion charge scheme is proposed in a desperate attempt to meet an arbitrary target that OCC committed to when bidding for the electric bus grant<sup>15</sup>. And, of course, OCC can't lose face by doing something that would improve bus reliability, such removing the LTNs. The LTNs, if anyone needs reminding "caused an immediate and profound collapse in service reliability and bus productively across East Oxford" .. and "have been a failure in almost all respects"<sup>16</sup> – according to the bus companies.

As a result, OCC will – if not challenged – will approve this scheme, to help it meet its bus company KPIs, while also making a few million pounds in revenue and fines<sup>17</sup>. And it will do so, no matter what damage the congestion charge inflicts on the city.

In light of OCC's intransigence in the face of appeals to reason, Oxford City Council should oppose the congestion charge proposals with all the powers at its disposal.

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<sup>10</sup> Ricardo, as above. Also. Steer. Traffic filters Temporry Road Charging Scheme – Modelling and Income Forecasting Report. June 2024. Available [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Ricardo, as above.

<sup>12</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1942118990244892793>

<sup>13</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1941443251212607774>

<sup>14</sup> <https://maps.app.goo.gl/zj8z6AxoSPBoeSyR8>

<sup>15</sup> <https://x.com/ReconnectingOx/status/1934883235814883644/photo/1>

<sup>16</sup> Additional East Oxford LTNs cabinet documents 17 October 2023, Annex 12. Available [here](#).

<sup>17</sup> Steer report, above.

## **Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth**

You will of course be aware that the Labour Group have on behalf of the City Council expressed our opposition to the proposals from the County Council and that we have a motion on the council agenda to that effect. But to be very clear, in the absence of a transport authority that is willing to listen to the views of the City's elected representatives and its' residents we do not have any powers to oppose this currently.

### **3. Address from Jack Abraham**

Thank you councillors for giving me the time, on behalf of The Smartphone Free Childhood Campaign, to speak with you today.

First and foremost we are parents. Many of you will be parents as well. Some of you will have older children and perhaps some of you are regretting choices that you made around how to integrate technology into your family. If that is you then forgive yourself. It has always been hard to raise children and now it is perhaps the hardest it has ever been.

This is precisely why we urgently need a coalition of parents, educators and policy makers to come together and co-create the environment in which our young people can flourish.

I want to draw your attention to the fifth aim of your motion. Where you articulate the council's intention to offer support and encouragement to continue to develop policies addressing concerns related to smartphone and social media use in schools.

You have read the statistics for yourself. Educators need support. Educators need encouragement and educators need tools to be able to make the necessary changes on behalf of young people and their families within their communities.

Our politicians and civic leaders must step in. You must help make the space to enable parents and educators to ask the hard questions of one another that need to be asked. To hold meaningful open discussions. To explore solutions together to be better able to navigate the myriad and highly individual circumstances in which they are living and working and help to provide the framework to create the solutions that work for them in light of the unhappy facts we are all faced with.

Of the many group action problems humanity faces today the question of allowing our children access to the internet, and - a more terrifying thought - allowing the internet access to our children, is one that is being addressed but by individual school leaders.

Leaders such as Louise Cowley here in Oxford at Spires Academy, however many schools in our county who are already struggling for resources do not have the time and wherewithal to take the step that she did and ban mobile phones.

There is a huge risk that if leadership on this issue is not provided then we will see more schools struggle to deliver the educational values and concepts they strive so hard to deliver every day.

We will see more children suffer both physically and mentally.

We will see an ever greater gap in attainment between children who are lucky enough, due to location or resources, to attend schools who have banned phones and those

children who, through no fault of their own, do not attend schools who have enacted a ban on mobile phones.

Children who do not attend schools where the responsibility to manage the immense effects of smartphones, social media, notifications and apps has been taken back from them and placed in the hands of responsible adults.

The word “ban” is loaded. Conjuring images of Puritanism and condemnation and hides what is a nuanced issue. So we understand that the implementation of a ban could be seen by some as being a backward or even regressive step.

Yet you have heard and read the statistics of the havoc on young people that the combination of smartphones and the internet is wreaking. Many of you will see the impact with your own eyes in your day to day life with your own children, family members and your clinics.

The truth then is exactly the opposite. For what could be more progressive than to reflect with humility on the new information we have learned and make change.

We did not know what we now know. We did not know that our children, young people and all of us in this room would be impacted in the ways we have been by this powerful technology.

It is now our duty to respond to this emergent and unignorable issue and take the necessary steps to protect our children and enable them to discover themselves, each other and the world around them without these seductive devices until they are ready.

#### **Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working and Inclusive Economic Growth**

While I have enormous sympathy for the aims of your campaign I am at a loss to understand what the motion thinks we can achieve that is not already being done by schools in the city. I would remind both you and city councillors that we are not currently the city’s education authority and that while we work closely to support our local schools and in particular to help them to raise attainment, we have no remit to instruct them to do anything.

#### **4. Address from Kaddy Beck**

The last time we spoke, we explained that we wanted to challenge your decision to appropriate Bertie Park on the grounds that our recreation ground is obviously “still required for the purpose for which it (was) held immediately before the appropriation.” (S122 LGA 1972)

Your documentation used data from the Local Insight Profile for Hinksey Park Ward (like the lower quartile house price and the % of households living in social rented homes) to show that there is “a significant need for affordable housing in the area.” Most would use this same data to conclude that there is also a significant need for recreation space.

In the cabinet meeting last October, Cllr Hollingsworth described your plans for Bertie Park as “a re-provision of open space, in a slightly different place/form and the provision of 2 new play areas in a slightly smaller form.”

“Slightly” was understatement of the year. At a time when you want to build hundreds more homes in this area, your documentation makes it clear that your proposed reprovision will not even meet the needs of existing users. But still you decided to proceed with appropriation.

Our lawyers advised us that we could not argue that this was wrong. We had to argue that no rational person could make this decision. Yet here we have a Labour council who argues, in the face of your own research and policies AND national policies, that areas that need social housing don’t also need proper recreation grounds.

So, our lawyers advised us to wait and challenge any award of planning permission.

It is nearly 2 years since the Environment Agency first objected to your plans for Bertie Park. In October 2023 Cllr Upton told us that you were considering amendments to “respond to the concerns expressed by the EA,” and that “any such amended plans (would) be re- consulted on .... ahead of any report to Planning Committee.” (Cllr Upton)

After 4 more letters from the Environment Agency, little has changed. One of their biggest objections is to a massive bridge that the EA say “is entirely inappropriate within the landscape and threatens the area's ecological functionality and ultimately value.” They also say that “it increases the risk of flooding both onsite and elsewhere”

You hold that this bridge is compensation for the significant downgrading of our recreation space because it improves access to the land behind Wytham Street. We would just like to point out that, some years ago, OCC installed bars at the entrance to the current bridge in response to complaints it received about joyriding. You now want to spend who knows how much money building a bridge to improve access to a 250m footpath/race track on land that the police say is not suitable for unaccompanied children. If the EA object to your bridge, we don’t think it makes much sense either!

So, would the council be able to tell us:

Whether you intend to meet all of the EA’s objections or to refer the application to the Secretary of State for Housing?

Whether you intend to hold a second consultation? If so, when?

And, because you have told us time and again that ALL of your proposals for replacement recreation facilities are only “indicative”, do you intend to clarify what your intentions really are before you apply for planning permission?

In responding to this, please don’t tell us that the site has been on the plan for 20 years.

While this is true, the plans, which you consulted on, complied with both local and national policies. Your current proposals do not.

call ..... and that nobody in this area wants.

Our recreation ground is central to our community, and with 200 extra homes Redbridge Paddock, Bertie Park will be needed even more. The Local Insight Profile for Hinksey Park Ward

We have a community area where .....

- 0.8 per cent of households suffer multiple deprivation compared with an England average of 0.5 per cent

### Housing tenure and affordability

47.4% of homes are owner-occupied against an England average of 64.1%. Of these 1.3% are shared ownership properties against the England average of 0.8%. 17.8% of households live in social rented homes almost in line with an England average of 17.7%.

The average house price to August 2020 is £401,360 where the England average is £304,430. The Lower Quartile house price ('affordable housing') is £125,321 against an England average of £39,328. The total ratio of years to earnings in Hinksey Ward is 6.89 compared to the England average of 3.57 years and the total ratio of years of earnings for a house is 8.3 against an England average of 5.5 (Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas Oct 16-17; ONS earnings data 2015/16).

There is therefore significant need for affordable housing in the area.

Date taken from [Local Insight profile for Hinksey Park Ward](#)

Disability		Impact: negative (immediate)	
	Attendance Allowance claimants (paid to people over the aged of 65 who are severely disabled. Physically or mentally and need a great deal of help) - claimants is 10.4%, compared to 12.5% in England	Lower than average number of residents with disabilities and or long term/terminal ill-health.	In the longer term the redevelopment is likely to have a positive impact re age and disability – creating more inclusive and accessible access to green space: A new accessible footbridge to Site B and a quality footpath for the nature trail are proposed facilitating pedestrian and wheelchair movement.
	Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health, terminal ill-health)- 3.4%, compared to 6.0% in England		

The documentation you submitted with your application the social profile of our area meant

that our need for social housing out-weighted our need for a recreation ground.

We were advised that we could not argue that this was so unreasonable that ... . This is what Cllr Hollingsworth believes. But we think that it is very surprising for a Labour council to

argue that working class areas don't need recreation grounds. Especially when they are supporting pop up play areas for under fives in town. What about

.... Years ago, residents in this area pressured the council to restrict access across the current bridge across the Redbridge stream to prevent joy riding on the land behind Wytham Street. You have now decided that our community needs a totally new bridge to provide better access to a 250m footpath on this land. The community don't want this bridge. You have received 5 letters from the EA say that the bridge is totally out of ... with the surroundings and likely to increase flooding across the area. Will you alter the design

### Response from Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

This is still a live planning application, and it will be decided by the LPA in due course.

OX Place, the Council's wholly owned housing company, have been working positively with the Environment Agency and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) with the intention to address all of the Environment Agency's objections. Updated bridge plans and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be submitted to the LPA shortly.

The last formal LPA consultation on this application was in May 2023. This additional information is expected to be subject to a fresh formal planning consultation after the receipt of it by the LPA.

OX Place also intend to continue further collaboration with the community, to build on the successful young person's engagement event conducted prior to the planning application submission, with a further engagement event with local young people, after planning, to finalise the plans for the play equipment.

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