

# **Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 6 October 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 Goddard	Councillor Harley
Councillor Henwood	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Jarvis
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Latif
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor Miles	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Powell
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Qayyum
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Robinson	Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Sandelson	Councillor Stares
Councillor Linda Smith	Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Smowton	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Waite	Councillor Yeatman

## **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

Rachel McKoy, Interim Monitoring Officer

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Dr Brenda McCollum, Committee and Member Services Officer

### **Apologies:**

Councillor(s) Jupp and Max Morris sent apologies.

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

### **25. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Jupp and Morris sent their apologies.

Councillors Latif, Corais, Roz Smith, and Yeatman sent their apologies for a late arrival to the meeting.

### **26. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Malik declared an interest in item 10 on the agenda.

Councillor Upton noted the interest.

### **27. Minutes**

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on **14 July 2025** as a true and correct record.

### **28. Appointment to Committees**

No new appointments were made.

### **29. Announcements**

#### **Announcement from the Lord Mayor**

Councillor Upton discussed the change in the constitution relating to the break and said that they may have the public address before the break. The Lord Mayor reflected on her work with friendship groups and different community groups across the city. She noted her meeting with young medical students from Gaza and said that it had made her hopeful for the future. The Lord Mayor spoke about the fun parts of her role, including the opening of St Giles' Fair. She thanked Oxford's healthcare workers, leys

development unit and adult volunteers. She noted her upcoming volunteer work to raise funds for and awareness of rough sleeping in Oxford and welcomed sponsorship for this event.

### **Announcement from the Deputy Lord Mayor**

Councillor Rowley said that it was a delight to welcome a new vicar to the parish. He noted that he was happy to attend a demonstration of solidarity with the community that attends the Oxford Central Mosque, particularly in light of recent events.

### **Announcement from the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Brown announced that they had elected a new champion for events and nightlife economy, Councillor Taylor. She noted that Councillor Taylor would be working with Councillor Hollingsworth in this role.

### **Statement from the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Brown made a statement on recent events in the country.

On Thursday last week we saw the horrible attacks on the Jewish community in Manchester on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar and yesterday there was an arson attack on a mosque in Peacehaven, which thankfully did not result in any loss of life. Last night I had the privilege of being at Oxford Synagogue where people of all faiths joined the Jewish community as we all mourned the attacks two years ago, but also the terrible destruction and loss of life in Gaza and hoped and prayed for peace. We're fortunate in Oxford to have several decades of different faith communities working together to find the many things that bind us together, but at a time when antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism are all on the rise we must all double down in our efforts to listen to each other and to encourage our communities to come together.

### **Announcement from the City Rector**

The City Rector said that all of the city's faith communities appreciated the City Council's interest in their work. He reflected on the day's anniversary of martyrdom, as a reminder that atrocities happened historically as they do today. His reflection called for people to stand together in the face of ongoing violence and fear.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

### **31. Appropriation of land at Elsfield Hall from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to seek Council approval for appropriation of land from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account (changing the statutory basis on which it is held by the Council).

Councillor Smith presented the paper. She said that this work should provide one hundred new affordable homes for the city. She said that two of the sites under consideration required Council agree to the appropriation of the sites. This appropriation is represented in agenda items 7 and 8. Councillor Smith said that the Elsfield site, they hoped, would provide over 30 new affordable homes for the city and that the site would be a mix of social rent and shared ownership. She moved the report and Councillor Turner seconded.

Councillor Fouweather encouraged Cabinet to increase the density of homes at this site, if possible, but noted that he was encouraged to see the report and its aspirations come forward.

Councillor Malik welcomed the report but asked what the plan was for the existing structure at the site.

Councillor Linda Smith said that they would take on board the density point and would make that argument to the planning department as they progressed. Regarding the Knights Court, she said that the plan was to convert the building to housing.

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

1. **Approve** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) at Elsfield Hall from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

*Councillor Roz Smith arrived during this item at 17:17.*

### **32. Appropriation of land at Cave Street from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account**

The Director of Economy, Regeneration and Sustainability had submitted a report to seek Council appropriation of the land at Cave Street from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to facilitate affordable housing development.

Councillor Linda Smith presented and proposed the report. She said that they hoped this site would create at least 19 new affordable homes. She said that they hoped to complete the development by the end of 2026.

Councillor Turner seconded the report. He said that the building had been demolished and that the scheme for start up units had not stacked up financially. Due to this, they decided to pursue the affordable housing scheme instead.

Councillor Roz Smith expressed her support for the scheme and for the building of the new homes in this location.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the appropriation of the land owned by Oxford City Council (OCC) at Cave Street from the General Fund (GF) into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

### **33. Cumulative Impact Assessment and Special Saturation Policy**

This report was deferred to a later meeting. The Monitoring Officer clarified that members would not be able to ask questions or discuss the report at this stage, but that the report would return to members for consideration later and that a full briefing would be provided to all members in due course.

### **34. Hackney Carriage Vehicle Emission Standards Amendment**

This report was deferred to a later meeting. The Monitoring Officer clarified that members would not be able to ask questions or discuss the report at this stage, but that the report would return to members for consideration later and that a full briefing would be provided to all members in due course.

### **35. Working Overseas Policy and Procedure**

The Head of People had submitted a report to Council to approve the Working Overseas Policy and Procedure.

Councillor Chapman presented the report. He said that this policy was the first of its kind for the Council and that data protection issues were at the centre of the policy. He noted the specific steps the policy proscribed for members and officers to work abroad and the countries which had been noted as dangerous to work in. Councillor Chapman proposed the report, and it was seconded by Councillor Munkonge.

Councillor Snowton questioned how the policy would benefit the cyber security of the Council. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services said that they were happy to review the policy as they go and integrate learnings. He noted that the policy was also one measure, amongst several others being implemented for their cyber security.

Councillor Turner asked about the scale of liabilities which members could have to pay. The Deputy Chief Executive – Citizen and City Services responded that in terms of ICO, he could not provide an answer regarding the scale of liabilities.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini asked about the delays that the policy could cause in members' ability to respond to members of the public.

Council discussed the challenges that could be caused by the policy and how this could impact their work.

**Council resolved not to:**

1. **Approve** the implementation of the Working Overseas Policy and Procedure.

Following debate of the policy, Councillor Chapman said that they would bring a revised policy back to the Council in November and proposed this to Council. This was seconded by Councillor Munkonge.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Agreed** to review the policy and to bring a revised Working Overseas Policy and Procedure back to Council in November.

*Councillor Corais arrived at the meeting during this item at 17:31.*

*Councillor Yeatman arrived during this item at 17:44.*

## **36. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **Cabinet Minutes – 13 August 2025**

No questions were raised.

### **Cabinet Minutes – 17 September 2025**

Councillor Smowton asked about the engagement with temporary accommodation and what was being done to make sure that this would not impact people who need to access this support.

Councillor Linda Smith said that she would bring a further update to Council in due course regarding their plans to expand access to temporary accommodation.

Councillor Fouweather asked about the Council's purchase of four food waste vehicles for ODS and why ODS did not lease the vehicles from a private contractor.

Councillor Chapman explained that this was the structure outlined for ODS's acquisition of vehicles and other expensive pieces of kit.

Councillor Turner said that ODS could choose other procurement routes, but that it was more cost effective for ODS to work with the Council than with a private vendor.

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

46 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 22 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

*Councillor Taylor arrived during this item at 18:08.*

*Councillor Gant left during this item, at 18:23.*

*The Lord Mayor moved to items 15 and 16 ahead of the break.*

### **38. Outside Organisation Report: Oxford Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) Annual Update 2025-26**

The Community Safety Service Manager had submitted a report for the annual update for 2025-2026 for the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

Councillor Arshad presented the report. She highlighted the priorities of the partnership, including tackling serious violence and violence against women and girls. She said that the report details work seeking to make Oxford a safer city. She moved the report, and it was seconded by Councillor Hollingsworth.

Council discussed the need to ensure a balance between a strong protection for vulnerable individuals and protecting the night-time economy in the city. Council also discussed actions being taken to address identified hotspots of disorder in particular areas of the city at night.

Councillor Arshad noted the community partnerships that they work in collaboration with to address these issues. She noted the particular work that had been done by Night Safe Oxford and the Oxford City Angels. She also discussed her work with the police to address hot spot areas of the city.

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

1. **Note** the annual update report of Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

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

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted a report which updates Council on the activities of scrutiny and the implementation of recommendations since the last meeting of Council.

Councillor Powell presented the report. He presented the Committee's meetings and the recommendations that they had considered in their meetings over the course of the year. He thanked officers and Cabinet for their discussions and support. Councillor Powell moved the report.

#### **Council noted the report.**

*Council took a break following this item from 18:45 – 19:15.*

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

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

Council heard 1 address 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 **Dan Glazebrook, a representative from Friends of Grandpont Nature Park.**

*Councillor Latif joined the meeting during this item at 19:23.*

#### **41. Motions on Notice October 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:**

- b) Oxford stands for diversity, for fairer migration policy and against the far right  
(Proposed by Councillor Powell, Seconded by Councillor Jarvis)

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

- a) Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather)

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

- c) Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Councillor Mundy, Seconded by Councillor Djafari-Marbini)
- d) Keep Oxford Open (Proposed by Councillor Goddard, Seconded by Councillor Smowton)
- e) Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Councillor Jupp, Seconded by Councillor Miles)



## 42. Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Proposed by Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather)

Councillor Smowton, Seconded by Councillor Fouweather, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

Following the debate and on being put to a vote, the following motion **was lost**.

Council resolved to:

**Reject** the following motion:

Council notes that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill<sup>1</sup> will, if passed, significantly change the way this council makes planning decisions. Council believes these changes will curtail local democratic oversight and reduce environmental protections.

Clause 51 gives the Secretary of State powers to decide which applications are heard at committee, and to dictate the size and composition of planning committees. This would remove opportunities for councillors to judge whether the harm and benefits of applications are appropriately balanced.

Part 3 would permit environmental obligations in relation to development to be discharged, disapplied or otherwise modified if a developer pays the nature restoration levy (called “cash to trash”<sup>2</sup> by the RSPB). This fund would be used according to a plan prepared by Natural England, not the local authority.

This council believes these measures go entirely against the spirit of effective local decision-making and evidence-based environmental protection.

Council agrees with the Office for Environmental Protection:

In our considered view, the bill would have the effect of reducing the level of environmental protection provided for by existing environmental law. As drafted, the provisions are a regression.<sup>3</sup>

Council also agrees with the 32 environmental organisations<sup>4</sup> and 81 environmentalists and academics who publicly criticised the bill, calling for a “Pause to bad law”.<sup>5</sup>

Council also agrees with the then Labour MP Chris Hinchcliff, who pointed out in June this year that “profit maximisation” is the biggest barrier to development, not “clear processes that uphold democracy and nature”.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/61396/documents/6667>

<sup>2</sup> As quoted by Carla Denyer MP, HoC, 9 June 2025, see HC Hansard, col 689: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-06-09/debates/3B8E0A89-3756-49FB-8C07-CECF3B58A26A/PlanningandInfrastructureBill>

<sup>3</sup> 1 May 2025: <https://www.theoep.org.uk/report/oep-gives-advice-government-planning-and-infrastructure-bill>

<sup>4</sup> Wildlife and Countryside Link, ‘Letter to Steve Reed MP, secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, ref Planning and Infrastructure Bill’, 8 April 2025: <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/2025/20250408WCLJointPlanningLetter.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Justin Adams et al, ‘Joint statement: Pause to bad law- a call for meaningful consultation on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill’, 22 May 2025: see House of Lords briefing, 19 June 2025, page 53: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2025-0025/LLN-2025-0025.pdf>

Council calls for the preservation of planning committees' current powers, and for a strong presumption towards environmental mitigation on-site or close by in preference to levy payment.

Council asks the Leader to write to Oxford's MPs communicating these concerns with the bill.

#### **43. Oxford stands for diversity, for fairer migration policy and against the far right (Proposed by Councillor Powell, Seconded by Councillor Jarvis)**

Councillor Powell, Seconded by Councillor Jarvis, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

Council agreed to suspend standing orders to extend the meeting by 30 minutes to continue the debate on this motion.

Following the debate and on being put to a vote, the motion **was agreed**.

#### **Council noted:**

1. Throughout the summer and into September, protests have taken place outside hotels housing asylum seekers across the UK, many directly organised by far-right groups.<sup>7</sup>
2. Over 100,000 people marched in London at a demonstration addressed by a number of far right figures.<sup>8</sup>
3. These demonstrations have also taken place on numerous occasions in Oxford outside the Kassam Stadium Holiday Inn.<sup>9</sup>
4. Alongside this, this summer also saw a racist attack on Central Oxford Mosque.<sup>10</sup>
5. Oxford City Council has consistently made clear that it wants to see a fairer migration system, that refugees are welcome in our city, and that policies like immigration detention and removal are harmful.<sup>11</sup> This was most recently and clearly illustrated through our obtaining of City of Sanctuary status.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Report stage, 10-11 June 2025, backbench amendment no. 69, see HC Hansard, 9 June 2025, col 678 and 729: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-06-09/debates/3B8E0A89-3756-49FB-8C07-CECF3B58A26A/PlanningandInfrastructureBill>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/23/members-of-far-right-party-organising-asylum-hotel-protests-across-uk-facebook-posts-show>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwydezxl0xlo>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25482399.oxford-asylum-protest-man-taken-away-police/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c70xnzp0ej4o>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yj5j072ero>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1612/oxford-city-council-awarded-local-authority-of-sanctuary-accreditation>

6. The government has recently announced new policies designed to create a more restrictive migration and asylum system, most notably through the suspension of family reunion.<sup>13</sup>

**Council resolved that it believes:**

1. Oxford is a city proud of its diversity and its history of solidarity with people from all across the world.
2. The protests and attacks seen this summer are deeply worrying, and are designed to intimidate and divide our communities.
3. Attempts by politicians, media outlets and commentators to whip up hate and to blame migrants and refugees for the problems in our society should be condemned.
4. Hostile attitudes towards migrants are in part driven by central government policies which seek to create a more hostile environment for migrants and refugees.
5. Neither hotel accommodation, nor detention centres are fair, humane or suitable accommodation for people seeking asylum, and a drawn-out, lengthy process for reviewing asylum applications is harmful for those enduring it.
6. People seeking asylum should not be prevented from working while their claims are being processed.
7. Enabling family reunion is a basic cornerstone of a humane and fair asylum system and suspending it risks putting people who would otherwise be allowed to enter the UK in significant danger.
8. Hostile rhetoric and policies directed at migrants and people seeking asylum make many Oxford residents less safe by fueling xenophobia and racism.

**Council resolved:**

1. To request the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Safer Oxford:
  1. Reiterate the council's commitment to stand with and support all of Oxford's diverse communities and to oppose attempts to divide and intimidate.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c626p66d6jxo>

2. Write to the Home Secretary reiterating this council's opposition to the re-opening of Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre and to the decision to suspend family reunion applications.
3. To publicly support and campaign for people seeking asylum to be permitted to work and accommodated within communities.

**44. Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Councillor Mundy, Seconded by Councillor Djafari-Marbini)**

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

**45. Keep Oxford Open (Proposed by Councillor Goddard, Seconded by Councillor Smowton)**

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

**46. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Councillor Jupp, Seconded by Councillor Miles)**

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

**The meeting started at 17:00 and ended at 21:00.**

**Lord Mayor .....**

**Date: Monday 24 November 2025**

*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:** 6 October 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 Malik to Cllr Brown**

#### **Question**

Council has passed the motion opposing the congestion charge. Does this mean the Administration also opposes the bus filters?

#### **Written Response**

We support the important principle of reducing congestion and emissions. It is abundantly clear that the current administration at the county council have undermined public confidence and consent to traffic measures and that a new approach of engagement will be necessary. We need solutions that meet Oxford's unique local needs, address equity concerns and fill critical gaps in infrastructure and accessibility. We also need far more homes nearer to Oxford to reduce the need for car travel into Oxford. Importantly we believe that better communication and engagement with local communities would not only improve outcomes but also strengthen public confidence and support for any future measures.

#### **Supplementary Question**

County Council opposes congestion charges, where does Cabinet stand on this issue?

#### **Verbal Response**

The Labour Party and Cabinet are against the congestion charge. However, the County Council set transport policy and the City Council are not able to make decisions on this policy.

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<b>SB2: From Cllr Malik to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> Val Smith was our former councillor who done lot for the people of oxford especially for the people of Blackbird Leys where she served on Parish, City and County Council same time the office manager for former MP Andrew Smith where she helped thousands of residents. Can you Confirm the new Community Centre in Blackbird Leys will be named after her and any new development take place on Blackbird Leys Road will be named after her?	<b>Written Response</b> As you would expect, we have consulted with Andrew and Val's family as we very much wanted to take this opportunity to honour her memory in the community she loved and served so well for so long. With their consent, we will name a road at the Knights Road site after her. The developer, Peabody trust, has already listed the addresses of new housing with the new name. Val's family expressed their preference for a road to be named after her, and community engagement for the new community centre demonstrated support for maintaining the centre's current name.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No follow up was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>SB3: From Cllr Malik to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> It was great to see the letter sent by the leader of the council to our twin city Ramallah in Palestine. Can we fly the flag of Palestine at the town hall to show solidarity to our twin city?	<b>Written Response</b> We have invited the Mayor of Ramallah to visit us in December when he hopes to be over in the UK. If that happens, then we would fly the Palestinian flag to welcome him.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Why has the administration not supported the flying of the flag of Palestine at the town hall?	<b>Verbal Response</b>

	If the Mayor of Ramallah comes to visit, as we hope that he will, we propose that we do fly the flag.
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<b>SB4: From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> What proportion of Members' Enquiry Forms are receiving responses within the target period?	<b>Written Response</b> Since the system went live 1304 enquiries have been received. 56% of OCC enquiries received a response within five days. Any feedback on the system can be sent to <a href="mailto:OCCCustomerRelations@oxford.gov.uk">OCCCustomerRelations@oxford.gov.uk</a>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> There is an issue with the Members' Enquiry Forms, what is being done to address this?	<b>Verbal Response</b> There is a review ongoing into the Members' Enquiry system. We look forward to the results of the review and how it will help us improve the system.

<b>SB5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> Following the resignation of the UK government minister for local government, can the responsible member please confirm that this council has not received any indication of changes to the planned reorganisation of local government?	<b>Written Response</b> The new MHCLG Secretary of State wrote almost immediately on his appointment to confirm his commitment to take forward swiftly and effectively both the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation programmes initiated by his predecessor and set out in the English Devolution White Paper.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No follow up was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>



<b>SB6: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Recent reports have outlined that the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance has now been delivered to the minister for women and equalities, and it is likely that implementation will follow in the near future. Given the fundamental implications that this guidance may have on the human rights of many Oxford citizens, will the portfolio holder ensure that any changes of policy following the guidance is subject to a decision of cabinet and is subjected to cross-party scrutiny?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Yes. Any substantive policy changes will follow the usual decision-making process.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>No follow up was asked.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>SB7: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>In light of the overturning of the first instance judgment regarding the Bell Hotel in Epping, will the portfolio holder take this opportunity to rule out any court proceedings aimed at ending the housing of asylum seekers in the Kassam Hotel within Oxford City?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>We have not explored legal proceedings to challenge the use of the Kassam hotel. It has been the view of this council since the previous Conservative government first housed people there that hotels are not suitable accommodation. We are pleased to see the Labour Government is taking action to reduce the use of hotels and we hope this will soon result in the Home Office no longer needing the hotel they use in Oxford.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>No follow up was asked.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; Deputy Leader of the Council (Statutory)**

**ET1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner**

**Question**

What steps has the city council taken to identify business rate payer locations where phoenix shops suspect to be operating and take coordinated action with relevant partner agencies to prevent the loss of business rates income from these businesses?

**Written Response**

From the business rates perspective, we do act where cases are identified, and they are sent to the Investigation Team and to Local Law Enforcement if action is required. Rate avoidance in this manner is not as prevalent in Oxford as in other areas such as central London.

**Supplementary Question**

How prevalent is business rate avoidance in Oxford and how do we identify specific units where this happens frequently?

**Verbal Response**

I may need to follow up with officers to get the precise data being requested. It is difficult for us to manage this issue when we are not the landlord for a particular property. Please send me the exact question and I will follow up with officers to get you a more precise answer.

**ET2: From Cllr Mundy to Turner**

**Question**

For how many different Council Tax (CT) debts were Civil Enforcement Agents (CEAs) used in 2024-2025?

**Written Response**

1025 were sent to our Enforcement Agents for Collection

**Supplementary Question**

**Verbal Response**

I will follow up with officers and email you an answer to this query.

What is the recent trajectory for cases going to the enforcement agent over the past five years?	
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<b>ET3: From Cllr Mundy to Turner</b>	
<b>Question</b> OCC CT recovery policy states that CEAs may be used even in cases where the debtor is identified as vulnerable. How many CEA visits were carried out in 2024-2025, following the identification of the debtor as being vulnerable?	<b>Written Response.</b> The Recovery Team do not send people who are flagged as vulnerable to our Enforcement Agents, Vulnerable cases are dealt with in-house. We use two firms of Enforcement Agents, both firms have their own Vulnerability specialists, we will return cases to the Council where vulnerability is identified.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Do you support editing of removing the part of the policy that states that CEAs may be used even in cases where the debtor is vulnerable?	<b>Verbal Response</b> We welcome the challenge on this topic, as it is an area where we want to continue to improve. We will work with agencies and teams supporting work in this area to get more information and integrate this feedback into our approach.

<b>ET4: From Cllr Mundy to Turner</b>	
<b>Question</b> Does OCC use multiple CEA contractors and were any contractors taken out of use in 2024-2025 due to their agents not following Professional Standards?	<b>Written Response</b> Our Contracts were renewed in 2024; no agents have been removed due to not following professional standards. All customer encounters are recorded using body worn cameras.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>ET5: From Cllr Mundy to Turner</b>	
<b>Question</b> Has OCC identified instances where the recovery of a CT debt was made harder due to the added burden on the debtor of the CEA fee(s)?	<b>Written Response</b> Enforcement Agents fees are prescribed by law and can be found In the Taking Control of Goods Act 2013.To date we have received no complaints concerning the level of fees.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>ET6: From Cllr Mundy to Turner</b>	
<b>Question</b> What was the gross financial cost to OCC, both operationally and through any fees incurred, of using CEAs in 2024-2025?	<b>Written Response-</b> There is no cost to the Council fees are collected from the debtor in accordance with the above Act.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>ET7: From Cllr Mundy to Turner</b>	
<b>Question</b> Have our CT Recovery Team undertaken any impact assessments, specifically regarding the use of CEAs and particularly in regard to debtors who may be vulnerable, since 2019-2020?	<b>Written Response</b> The have been no such impact assessments carried out as when vulnerability is identified, as the cases are dealt with in-house.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

Would the member support a risk assessment, to ensure we understand the full impact of our current policy?	We do impact assessments when the policy is created and instituted. When we review the policy, we can do a further impact assessment as part of that process. We will review the policy with officers, as we need to be adept at signposting those in need. We want all conversations and policies to be evidenced from practice.
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ET8: From Cllr Muddiman to Turner	
<b>Question</b> <p>Can you explain how the awarding of the pre-construction contract for Oxpens River Bridge to Balfour Beatty, a notorious company whose negligence led to the death of a construction worker and serious injuries to another in 2020, who were fined £49million for fraud for systematically falsifying data in 2021, and who are currently being sued for £34m after substandard building work required the evacuation of an entire student block this year, meets the Council's own ethical procurement policies and procurement strategy?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>All procurement has to comply with both the laws governing local authority procurement and the Council's own constitution and requirements in relation to procurement.</p> <p>Balfour Beatty were procured through SCAPE, a local authority procurement framework <a href="https://scape.co.uk/our-frameworks">https://scape.co.uk/our-frameworks</a>.</p> <p>In the light of cost increases the construction of the bridge is to be tendered through another framework, Pagabo, to enable a competitive process.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>Can you confirm that you have no concerns about Balfour Beatty's reputation and record?</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>I am not going to say that I am not concerned about the company's reputation and record. However, we have to follow our own policies for the procurement of companies. If we don't follow our own policies, then we can make ourselves open to a legal challenge.</p>

**ET9: From Cllr Powell to Turner****Question**

In light of the appearance of flags on council property in towns and cities across the UK, will the portfolio holder please outline the City Council's policy regarding flags which have been affixed to City Council property without consent?

**Written Response**

If anyone reports an issue where a flag is causing a problem, then the City Council can remove it. Most flags that have been displayed in the city are attached to structures owned by Oxfordshire County Council, such as bridges and streetlights

**Supplementary Question**

In what instances will the City Council remove flags?

**Verbal Response**

The Leader has issued a statement on flags. The removal of flags will depend on the nature of the problem and the report made. However, my personal view is that I love the flag and my country, and despise those who are abusing the flag in this way.

**Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford; Deputy Leader of the Council**
**AR1: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton****Question**

Luke Marion, MD of Oxford Bus Company has said that Oxford is trapped "in a vicious cycle of people driving private cars because public transport is too slow, which adds more vehicles onto the roads and in turn worsens the situation". He believes that the Congestion charge "will help reduce traffic, make bus journey times faster and more reliable, enable the

**Written Response**

Although we feel the temporary congestion charge for cars could have been designed better for residents it is acknowledged that the scheme is likely to reduce the number of cars in the city centre and so lessen congestion for buses.

delivery of new and improved bus routes, and reduce pollution." Does the portfolio holder agree with him?	
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  What is your position on the congestion charge? What would you do differently with this policy?	<b>Verbal Response</b>  The congestion charge is regressive. We stated that it would probably work, not that we support the charge being implemented.

<b>AR2: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b>  What discussions have the council had with Network Rail about the need for the Beckett Street car park to become a transport hub/bus station?	<b>Written Response</b>  We continue to work closely with Network Rail on long-term plans to redevelop Oxford station and I welcome the news that they are currently procuring a new design team to take forward a new masterplan and planning application for the station redevelopment.  The need for an improved bus interchange at the station is critical and will need to be explored through this work, in collaboration with both the City and County Councils, and the bus companies. Initial work undertaken demonstrates that it should be possible to provide necessary bus capacity on the station forecourt and on-street, which would enable Beckett Street car park to be considered for enabling development to help pay for the scheme.  However, this will be explored in detail through the upcoming design process, including through the pre-application planning process.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Would you support the building of a multi-story car park, where the Beckett streetcar park currently is?	<b>Verbal Response</b>

	This matter is not one for us, or the City Council to decide. However, personally, I would like to see the redevelopment of the station done with as little car parking as possible.
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## Cabinet Member for a Safer Oxford

LA1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad	
<b>Question</b> <p>The Kassam Hotel, which is currently home to a number of people seeking asylum in the UK, has recently been a location targeted by far-right activists. Will the portfolio holder please undertake to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure that the geographic remoteness of the hotel has been considered and that proper plans have been formulated to ensure that violence of the kind that swept the UK last summer can be effectively contained should it arise?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>There is a national policing response to the protests outside hotels being used to house people seeking asylum. Thames Valley Police are part of that response and I have had assurances from senior police officers in Oxfordshire that an appropriate level of policing is allocated, ensuring there is not a breach of the peace and to facilitate peaceful protest.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>No follow up question was asked.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

LA2: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Arshad	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>



<p>Hope Not Hate have made a range of excellent recommendations about how local people can promote community cohesion, safety and wellbeing through grassroots sports events and in community centres. Could the portfolio holder assure us that she is working with both the portfolio Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to invest in community led projects in the most economically deprived areas?</p>	<p>The Council is working with communities under its Thriving Communities strategy to deliver significant impact within these areas. This includes the Council's grants schemes such as the Oxford Community Impact fund that helps support many of our community groups in these areas.</p> <p>In addition, the Council has worked with our leisure provider to provide a variety of different activities including kids free swimming, concessionary access and in-kind funding which has helped provide free or reduced fee access to groups in our most deprived areas.</p> <p>We have also been working closely with our communities and partners on various programmes which include Move Together, You Move and Park Play aimed at getting individuals and families to move more.</p> <p>Recently the Council has, in collaboration with young people on the Leys, developed the Leys Youth Hub bringing in approximately £1.7 million in external funding and enabling a programme of youth developed activities at the Leys Leisure Centre.</p> <p>The Council has invested heavily in its community facilities and new replacement community centre is being delivered in Blackbird Leys and a modernised community Centre in East Oxford, both were shaped by significant community engagement.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>No follow up question was asked.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

### Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

<p><b>NC1: From Cllr Malik to Cllr Chapman</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p>

How much revenue has been generated year by year to-date since the council have introduced the Bulky items charge?

at 30/09/2026	£
financial year	net income
2014/15	-1,125.00
2015/16	-1,575.00
2016/17	-2,548.00
2017/18	-1,950.00
2018/19	-1,500.00
2019/20	-2,125.00
2020/21	-3,625.00
2021/22	-102,340.00
2022/23	-87,825.51
2023/24	-76,442.10
2024/25	-80,699.00
2025/26 (YTD)	-55,269.55
	-417,304.16

Local authority pricing for a single bulky waste item varies significantly. A review of pricing across all LAs in 2021 shows the average cost for a single item was £28.

Oxford's 25/26 pricing is £23.50 (£10) per household item and £34.50 (£15) for large electrical/white goods. Large white/electrical item collections incur higher operational costs. The prices in brackets are for discounted rates for residents on benefits (Oxford provides greater than 50% discount).

**Supplementary Question**

**Verbal Response**

No follow up question was asked.	
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<b>NC2: From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b>  How can recent issues with widespread uncollected waste in north Oxford and elsewhere be prevented from recurring?	<b>Written Response</b>  The Waste & Recycling service has experienced difficulties throughout the summer. Predominantly, this is due to a particular issue with agency staff's availability and unfortunately some vehicle breakdowns over the summer. The Council & ODS are treating this as a high priority. A focused recruitment drive is underway to employ more drivers and loaders directly whilst reducing our reliance on freelance agency staff and four new refuse vehicles should arrive in the next few months. This will allow for better management and scheduling of rotas and help reduce the likelihood of issues arising in the future. The last four weeks have seen a considerable improvement with no incomplete rounds.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>NC3: From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b>  What is the service level agreement the city council has with its fully owned company ODS for the frequency and intensity of street cleaning of the central city centre zone streets of Cornmarket, Queen's Street, George Street, High Street and Broad Street?	<b>Written Response</b>  Street cleaning in the city centre is carried out in accordance with our Service Standards. Cornmarket, Queen Street, George Street, High Street and Broad Street receive high intensity cleaning from 5am daily. This includes mechanical sweeping, litter picking, litter bin emptying and detritus removal. These areas are maintained throughout the course of the day, seven days per week. This high intensity is based on the volume of pedestrians who use these streets on a daily basis.

	Mechanical sweeping is carried out once/twice per day in these areas. Litter picking and bin emptying has a constant daily presence. When it's very busy, areas such as Bonn Square can have up to 10 visits per day for a combination of litter picking, manual sweeping and bin emptying.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>NC4: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b>  Which herbicides does Oxford City Council and ODS use and where?	<b>Written Response</b>  ODS uses a glyphosate-based herbicide on a spot application basis to hard paved areas including car parks, pavements, kerb-side areas and council garage forecourts across the city. There are three applications per year. It is 'spot applied' and not a blanket treatment to reduce chemical use. It is <i>not</i> routinely used in parks and open spaces (other than around the perimeter of tennis courts) – and hasn't been used in this way for at least 10 years in Oxford
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Does ODS only use one type of herbicide?	<b>Verbal Response</b>  We will have to check with officers about this and respond to you later, via email.

<b>NC5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b>  In response to a survey by Pesticide Action Network in 2024, the council said that it used herbicides in the following spaces: parks and green spaces, cemeteries, playing fields, road Verges and roundabouts, hard	<b>Written Response</b>  A paper was submitted to OCC in 2023, which outlined the approach to weed killing in numerous local authorities, using information from APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence). It was commissioned by me

<p>surfaces (eg. pavements) and housing estates. In the same survey, Labour run Cambridge City Council said they did not use herbicides in any of those spaces. Why is Oxford not as committed as Cambridge to the protection of our biodiversity, water, soil and air?</p>	<p>as the Cabinet Member for Citizen-Focused Services. This summarised outcomes as well as costs in most of these examples.</p> <p>The review found that significant care was taken in the way Glyphosate is used by ODS in Oxford to minimise negative impacts on wider biodiversity. It also found that all the alternative weed treatments had a higher cost, and none had demonstrated the level of effectiveness of Glyphosate. The use of acetic acid, for instance, created new risks to the insect population and to humans. Relying on more manual human intervention was prohibitively expensive and hard to find staff to undertake this work.</p> <p>The continued tightly controlled application of Glyphosate to tackle weed penetration of paved surfaces and invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed was approved by the City Council. This is in line with current DEFRA and Environment Agency guidance, and is entirely legal, in the UK, the USA and large parts of the EU.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Why is Oxford not as committed as Cambridge to protecting biodiversity?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>We reviewed our approach to this issue in 2023. We cannot speak to how Cambridge operates, but we are operating in both a cost effective and efficient way for the city and its residents.</p>

## Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

<b>AH1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Has the city council undertaken any economic analysis of the proportion of city jobs related to different economic sectors and vocational groups, such as</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The City Council assesses housing need in line with the regulations governing planning and in partnership with relevant statutory bodies and partner organisations.</p>

<p>education (teachers), and healthcare (nurses, doctors)? What steps had the council taken to match the housing categories it is investing in with the categories of jobs and related wage brackets of the economic sectors that drive the city's economy?</p>	<p>The requirement for new affordable rented homes, identified in the Local Plan, and developed in partnership with Registered Providers, is informed by a household's housing need on the Housing Register, for example overcrowding and the number of bedrooms required, or adaptations for needs. The Council does not match housing categories to specific jobs or wage brackets of specific economic sectors.</p> <p>To meet wider housing needs, the Local Plan also recognises the need for intermediate housing to be provided, including for example shared ownership. Many homes being delivered in the affordable housing supply programme provide for this low-cost route into home ownership and this offer has been taken up by a number of key workers.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Local Plan identifies some sites in the city as being appropriate for delivery as Employer-Led housing schemes (especially on health and education sites) to assist in further housing delivery on sites that may otherwise be unsuitable for general needs affordable homes.</p> <p>The Council cannot and does not assess housing need based on different economic sectors and vocational groups.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>What action has the administration taken to support housing schemes for teachers and nurses to address the shortage of accommodation for these groups?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>The current local plan demonstrates conversations on specific policies regarding particular sites for hospitals and schools. This work will continue in the next local plan and in its preparation.</p>

AH2: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth	
Question	Written Response

How does the Council intend to floodproof the route between Osney Mead and Grandpont Nature Park, to ensure the planned Oxpens River Bridge is accessible from Osney Mead and Osney Island in times of flood?	<p>The bridge and the connecting paths that would be improved are designed not to flood or are situated outside the floodplain. There are no current proposals to make the towpath under the railway bridge at the western end of Grandpont Nature Park floodproof.</p> <p>We will work with the University and other landowners on Osney Mead to explore options to provide a safe means of refuge through the masterplanning for that area. This may or may not involve work to the path under the rail bridge as part of proposals to address flooding in the locality.</p> <p>The purpose of the Oxpens River Bridge is, as was made clear in the many reports on the principle, the proposed bridge, the planning application and reports considered at different stages by the City Council, is to provide connectivity between a range of different locations to the south and west of the bridge and the city centre to the north. It is not primarily a safe means escape route from Osney Mead at times of flooding.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH3: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b>  How much of the additional £3.7m required for the Oxpens River Bridge has so far been pledged by Oxford University, Homes England and/or any other external sources?	<b>Written Response</b>  We currently have an in-principal agreement with the University of Oxford to cover £1m of the additional costs. Conversations are on-going with other parties.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH4: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Can the portfolio holder confirm that, should the full £3.7m for the Oxpens River Bridge not be raised from external sources, the decision to spend any City Council funds from the budgets allocated for that purpose at the Cabinet meeting on 13th August 2025 will need to be approved by a future meeting of Cabinet?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>As I made clear at the Cabinet meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2025, should the external funding not be found then the decision would need to be reviewed. The purpose of the Cabinet decision was to allow the project to proceed if the funding is secured, rather than incur still further delay with the increased cost consequences of that delay, to add to the costs already incurred because of delays such as the unsuccessful legal challenges.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>No follow up question was asked.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Can the portfolio holder clarify who owns the land between East St and the River Thames?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>No, as I do not possess information from the Land Registry about land ownership. I would suggest a Member Enquiry to identify the ownership of the land in question, defining exactly on a map which land is being referred to in case there are multiple owners.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>No follow up question was asked.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>In September the City Council facilitated a meeting between the landowner and the Jericho Wharf Trust to discuss their plans for the site. Another</p>



Since the last Full Council meeting, what specific actions has the council taken to resolve the Jericho Boatyard situation?	meeting is planned in November, where we will see if the landowner will demonstrate progress on bringing forward a scheme for the site. We will continue to work with all parties to look at the full range of options to bring forward development on the site.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

### AH7: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson

#### Question

What is the planning status of the two locations being used for hand carwash businesses operating a) on Wash and Go car wash business on the Abingdon Road next to Tesco and b) behind the derelict buildings at 21 and 22 South Parade, and the history and current status of any planning enforcement taken around the alignment of usage of these sites with planning status?

#### Written Response

This is a general question which would be better put to officers in the Planning Service directly so that they can provide you with a fuller response on the planning history for both sites including the status of any enforcement history.

In brief terms the car wash on the Abingdon Road was the subject of a two unsuccessful prosecutions for an unauthorised use in 2014. Further consideration was being given at that time as to how to proceed with the enforcement notice but it does not appear to have been pursued.

In relation to the derelict buildings to the rear of 21 and 22 South Parade, our enforcement officers have undertaken a quick inspection following this question and could not see any evidence of a car wash. If the member would like to send details of the alleged unauthorised use to the enforcement team they will investigate.

#### Supplementary Question

Why was enforcement not pursued with the car wash on Abingdon Road, and why is the administration supporting a company that is breaking rules?

#### Verbal Response

In terms of the Council's position, there were two unsuccessful prosecutions. However, that is the limit of the Council's enforcement processes. We are aware of the potential links between these types of companies and modern slavery; however we have no evidence that these

operators are responsible for modern slavery. We would be cautious of using that wording without evidence.

#### **AH8: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Clarkson**

##### **Question**

People submitting comments on planning applications presently have their names and addresses published. This can on occasion be a vector for abuse, and is not in general required; rather, different councils take different views as to how and when details associated with comments are published. Will you consider revising the City's approach to this?

##### **Written Response**

The council's procedures with respect to the handling of comments on planning applications are long-standing and accord with the GDPR regulations. The council's privacy statement makes clear to residents how their data will be handled.

The manner in which we handle this data is consistent with a number of our neighbouring authorities. The LPA consider it is important for the public to see who has commented on a planning application as it ensures that there is an open and transparent process and that sufficient weight can be given to the representation. There are no plans to make changes to our approach at this stage.

##### **Supplementary Question**

What action is being taken to ensure that address information is only being published when it is strictly legally necessary?

##### **Verbal Response**

There are strong views on both sides of this issue and there are a range of reasons why we would not want this data to be published. We will discuss this with officers and ensure that this is appropriately addressed.

#### **AH9: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson**

##### **Question**

Is planning permission needed for community notice boards to be installed on a) council owned land and b) land owned through housing management companies

##### **Written Response**

on housing estates in our city? Of the new community notice boards installed in the city in the last 5 years, how many received planning permission and who has paid for the planning permission fees?	<p>Permission is not needed for a notice board on council owner land if it is installed by the council. It would be required on land owned by housing management companies on housing estates in our city.</p> <p>We have not refused any notice boards as far as I am aware.</p> <p>The planning fee is paid for by the applicants.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

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

35

<b>CM1: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b>  How much money was spent to provide free leisure experience for non-Oxford residents and did MHCLG approve this as a legitimate use of these funds?	<b>Written Response</b>  If the question is referring to the recent campaign around a Greater Oxford under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) then I can confirm that no money was spent on providing free leisure experiences to non-Oxford residents. We're proud of Oxford's excellent leisure service provision, which should provide a template for a Greater Oxford Council.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  What is the notional value at the gate of the services provided free under this scheme?	<b>Verbal Response</b>  No amount of money was provided for free.

<b>CM2: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>

<p>The women only swimming sessions at the OCC leisure centres often have male lifeguards which make them less accessible. What steps are being taken to address this?</p>	<p>There have been some challenges across the country around recruitment of lifeguards in general and Oxford has had similar challenges. Working with our leisure operator we have taken steps to try and address this such as regular free training and lifeguard qualifications and better promotion and engagement with our communities. We are also working on a longer-term basis to improve access, skills and education into the industry with partners such as CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) on the trail blazer Local Skills Advisory Board <a href="#">Oxfordshire - CIMSPA</a>.</p> <p>I am pleased to confirm that an additional four female lifeguards have been recruited which should help to address this.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>From my experience, swimming pools are not prioritizing women's only sessions and ensuring that men leave at the appropriate times. Is there any way of changing how staff address this problem?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>We will follow up on that with officers and come back to you with a response.</p>

## Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

<p><b>LS1: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Smith</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Could the portfolio holder provide the list of community centres that currently stock free period products and how it monitors and ensures there is a continued</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The Council consulted with the Federation of Community Centres in relation to the best way to work with them to deliver this. The Federation</p>

<p>supply of these products? If there are community centres that do not have these in supply, could the cabinet member provide an explanation for this and the plan for implementation?</p>	<p>worked with its member community centres funding each a one-off sum of £150 to purchase and stock period products.</p> <p>We can only guarantee stock at the Community Centres we manage (currently Rose Hill Community Centre). There is an annual review of this at the Community Associations meeting which the Council and Community Associations attend. This is scheduled for the 6 November.</p> <p>The Community Centres within the scheme include Barton Neighbourhood Centre, Rose Hill Community Centre, Cutteslowe Community Centre, Donnington Community Centre, Florence Park Community Centre, Risinghurst Community Centre, Headington Community Centre, South Oxford Community Centre, Jubilee Hall, Bullingdon Community Centre, Northway Community Centre, Asian Cultural Centre, Littlemore Community Centre, West Oxford Community Centre and Regal Community Centre.</p> <p>If any of the centres are running low or are out of stock we would recommend that they contact the Federation of Community Associations or contact the Council.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>No follow up question was asked.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>LS2: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>OCC aims to make cycling safer and more accessible. One of our residents in an A2 housing association block has been asking for a safe place to keep their bike for three years. The bike is not allowed in the communal areas or the garden, leaving the residents of these one bedroom flats with nowhere to store bikes. What actions are being taken to act on partners such as housing associations not engaging with OCC aims?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>While we have no regulatory powers over Housing Associations and their management activities, if the member could provide me with the location of this block, we will make formal enquiries regarding the possibility of a bike store being installed.</p>

<b>Supplementary Question</b>	<b>Verbal Response</b>
No follow up question was asked.	

<b>LS3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Huge screens have appeared in the tower blocks in The Leys that are meant to be fire safety notices but are often blank. What was the cost of this instalment to the council and why was more traditional method of communications such as newsletters not used?	<b>Written Response</b> Digital noticeboards have been installed in each of the five tower blocks to cover a range of real time information about the building, activities, Council news, services and other important safety information. They have not been installed in place of fire safety notices. The noticeboards have not been commissioned yet and are expected to be switched on in October. The budget for the noticeboards and their installation was approved by Cabinet in February 2024. Hard copy Newsletters will still be provided where appropriate.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Residents at Knights Road have been unable to access their rear gate for many months meaning they cannot for examples use their bicycles. They have raised this with Hill numerous times to no effect and now residents' fences have been damaged and a fence has been erected on the other side which means	<b>Written Response</b> Hill has been liaising with local residents during construction to tackle issues with fences and access through the back of residences of Knights Road. Damaged fences or ones that are in incorrect locations will be fixed or relocated by the contractor. Access to the alleyway may have to be restricted or blocked during construction works but this is temporary and will be reinstated by the developer once works are completed. Hill are

residents cannot access the alleyway. How will the cabinet member ensure that the blocking off of rear gates, and damage to fences is addressed in a timely manner?	addressing residents' concerns and issues as they arise and based on individual resident needs.  The Council meets with Peabody once a week to monitor and escalate resident concerns when needed.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Does the member have a time frame for when the damaged fences will be fixed?	<b>Verbal Response</b>  We will write back to the Councillor with a timeline after consulting with officers.

39

<b>LS5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b>  This Council was awarded City of Sanctuary status in Dec 2024. Cities of Sanctuary promote positive narratives that highlight the contributions of people seeking refuge and challenge negative stereotypes often perpetuated by media, fostering a broader sense of solidarity and welcome within the community. Despite this and numerous anti asylum protests at the asylum seeker hotel in the city in recent weeks, there has not been a media strategy from the council communications team, humanising the asylum seeker residents at the hotel. This is despite the fact that many asylum seekers have fled unimaginable situations, are volunteers inc in food banks (they are not permitted to work), and a valued part of local sports teams (supported by the great work of the communities team). When will this Council of Sanctuary humanise	<b>Written Response</b>  Our commitment to being a council of sanctuary is underpinned by our Council of Sanctuary Framework and three-year action plan. This includes the creation of opportunities and space for people seeking sanctuary to have their voices heard and their stories told. I am working with our communities' team and communications team on a media strategy for publicising the great work supported by our Community Impact Fund and this will feature migrant voices.

our neighbours at the hotels in its media output via a thought through strategy and help our communities heal?	
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  What is the strategy to humanize asylum seekers and refugees at hotels?	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Hotel residents are getting involved with projects funded through community impact funding. We will seek out opportunities to feature those individuals.

<b>LS6: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b>  Recent reports have suggested that the new Home Secretary is planning to move people seeking asylum out of hotels and into large scale facilities such as military bases. This echoes actions which under the previous government resulted in vulnerable people's health being seriously undermined, including through the spreading of diseases such as dysentery which had otherwise been eradicated from the UK. The Oxford Mail has reported that the proposed moves will include Asylum Seekers housed in Oxfordshire, including those in Oxford City. As an accredited City of Sanctuary, will the portfolio holder undertake to write to the Home Secretary to publicly state this council's opposition to having the vulnerable people housed in our city removed and placed into facilities which, as many experts have outlined, can be considered to be unfit for human habitation?	<b>Written Response</b>  The Home Secretary is working to fix the asylum system after the Tories failed to manage it effectively. Tory failure to process asylum claims led to the ballooning use of hotels for accommodation. The Labour Government is taking action to reduce the use of hotels, and we hope this will soon result in the Home Office no longer needing the hotel they use in Oxford. We need to see asylum claims being processed swiftly with asylum seekers being accommodated in decent conditions which provide for their welfare for the necessary duration. If we were to become aware of sub-standard conditions in Home Office provided accommodation within our area then of course we would take action.



<b>Supplementary Question</b>	<b>Verbal Response</b>
No follow up question was asked.	

<b>LS7: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Will the portfolio holder take this opportunity to re-affirm the commitment of this council to the principles of the City of Sanctuary Scheme and offer a condemnation of the anti-migrant organising taking place within our city?	<b>Written Response</b> Yes. Oxford City Council is proud to have been awarded Council of Sanctuary status. Migration has a positive impact on our community, and we are proud to welcome people from around the world to our city including those in search of a place of safety. The use of hotels to accommodate asylum seekers by the Home Office is not something supported by either this Council or the public, and the far-right should be condemned for exploiting the situation created by the Tory Government's failure to stop small boat crossings and competently manage the asylum system.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS8: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> The highways delays around Blackbird Leys Road and Knights Road are causing untold misery to our residents who are struggling to access their local amenities. Residents are describing that "a big hole has been made and left". Regarding the disruption and unacceptable delay: What engagement, if any, is the cabinet member having with the responsible authority Oxfordshire CC?	<b>Written Response</b> The highways works have been delayed because Thames Water works took longer than anticipated, and now Hill have had to replace their roadworks subcontractor. The latest update from Peabody and Hill is that an appointment is imminent and they are doing what they can to resume works as soon as possible. The Council has weekly meetings with Peabody to monitor progress, and understand what is being done to mitigate impacts, and I receive regular updates from our project manager.

<b>Supplementary Question</b>	<b>Verbal Response</b>
Why were the road work contractors replaced?	We cannot go into the contractual details in public session. However, they hope to have a replacement to the contractors in place by the middle of the month.

<b>LS9: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Has the cabinet member been informed as to why a new subcontractor is involved in the works and will this delay the reopening of the road even further?	<b>Written Response</b> The works are instructed by Peabody and being delivered by Hill. They have advised of the need for a new subcontractor but that the details are confidential. Hill are currently working to procure an alternative subcontractor to resume and complete works. We are told they are doing everything they can to expedite the process, but this will cause delays to both Highways works in the District Centre and groundworks at Knights Road. The extent of delay is currently unknown, but the Council meets with the developer weekly for updates and we will continue to push for the work to progress as soon as possible with minimum further disruption to residents.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> No follow up question was asked.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS10: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> There is a huge need in The Leys for community space. What is the current timetable for opening of the community centre?	<b>Written Response</b> The new community centre is scheduled for completion by late 2027. Stakeholders and local residents will be kept updated if this needs to be

	reviewed as a result of the current delays to the associated highways works.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Is there a timetable for decisions for the governance processes of the community centre in place?	<b>Verbal Response</b>  We will run it directly for two years, at that point, once we have established costs and understand how the centre is working and can share information, then it will be worth reviewing the information and speaking with groups interested in taking over management.

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## **Council received an Address from Dan Glazebrook, a representative from Friends of Grandpont Nature Park.**

Almost 2000 people, the vast majority of them local residents, have now signed the petition against Oxpens River Bridge and its connecting paths. There are many reasons people are up in arms - the ecological destruction involved, the lack of democratic consultation, the fact that there are already two excellent pedestrian and cycle bridges within quarter of a mile of the site, the misuse of £10million of public money intended to facilitate affordable housing - but what I want to focus on today is how the bridge singularly fails to meet its own intended purpose - to provide a floodproof connection from Osney Mead to Oxpens.

The local plan specifies the need for both a new bridge linking Osney Mead to the other side of the river, and a floodproof route out of Osney Mead. These two things have subsequently been combined into plans for a single floodproof connection reaching all the way from Osney Mead across the river, as is made clear in several official documents.

The problem is, to reach the bridge from Osney Mead, users would have to go across a stream and under a railway bridge along a section of the towpath that frequently floods.

To solve this problem, the City Council commissioned Stantec to develop a project called Osney Pathworks, to create a new floodproof path linking Osney Mead to the planned new bridge. The preferred plan was to erect floodwalls under the railway bridge. But the Environment Agency vetoed this proposal in 2021, as it would cause further flooding elsewhere. Stantec's report admitted there is no solution available which adequately addresses the flooding issue whilst also meeting current safety standards for cycling and walking.

This remains the case today. There is still no solution to the issue of flooding on the path between Osney Mead and the proposed new bridge.

This makes the bridge completely redundant, as it utterly fails to provide the new floodproof connection from Osney Mead across the river without which housing cannot be built on the site and which was the whole point of the project in the first place. Indeed, the diversion of £1.5million Homes England funding for precisely such a floodproof route out of Osney Mead to instead build connecting paths for the bridge in Grandpont Nature Park means the Council now stands in breach of the terms of that grant and the criteria under which it was allocated, a matter we are pursuing with Homes England themselves.

The City Council is now right on the verge of committing up to £14million of public money, and causing irrevocable damage to a cherished piece of countryside on our doorstep, for a bridge that singularly fails to meet its basic purpose. We urge you - please do not be a party to this shocking waste of money and biodiversity. Surely no further funds should be committed so long as there remains no viable plan to floodproof the connection between Osney Mead and the new bridge.

I would also like to address the issue of the University's funding commitments to the scheme. A spokesman for the University told the Oxford Mail back in January that, the University, quote, "last year agreed to make a contribution of around 10 per cent

of the cost of the new bridge after learning that cost increases had put its viability at risk.”

10% at that time equated to more than £1 million of the project’s projected costs. If the University had already committed more than a million pounds last year, why is this financial commitment not appearing in the figures before us today? Why is the public purse being asked to guarantee the full £3.7million in increased costs, and not, say, £2.7 million, given that a million from the University is already in the bag? Have the University now reneged on this commitment? And if the Council is willing to commit the entirety of the increased costs from the public purse, what incentive is there for the University to contribute any money at all?

Finally I would also like to address the issue of Balfour Beatty’s position in the delivery of the scheme. If all goes according to plan, Balfour Beatty are set to be awarded the construction contract next month. Balfour Beatty are a notorious company. They are involved in the imposition of near-slavery conditions on their migrant workforce in Qatar; just four years ago they were fined £49 million for massive fraud against the US government after it was revealed they had been systematically falsifying data in order to get bonus payments - and in this country their failure to comply with statutory safety requirements led in 2020 to the death of one construction worker and serious injuries to another, according to a ruling by the Health and Safety Executive last year.

But as well as being criminally unethical, they are also just not very good builders. On trustpilot, they are rated ‘bad’ with just 1.7 stars out of 5 and student residents have had to be moved out of their accommodation in Bethnal Green recently due to significant defects which have been blamed on the contractor, and which have cost its owner over £34million to address.

Why is the Council so keen to work with these incompetent criminals that it is prepared to set aside its usual tendering process and guarantee the contract to Balfour Beatty 30 without any tendering at all? And is it’s willingness to do so the reason why the company feels confident enough to hike its bill by over 35%, from £10 to £14 million in just a few months?

After all, the company do have form here - in 2016, one of their employees revealed how they had been extorting the taxpayer by systematically inflating their costs. The company responded by sacking the whistleblower, for which they were later forced to pay £137,000.

I will end there but if you would like to be in touch about this, or to see any of the documentation I have referred to today, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Friends of Grandpont Nature Park at [gnptrees@gmail.com](mailto:gnptrees@gmail.com)

More information is also available at our website - [savegnp.org](http://savegnp.org)

**Councillor Hollingsworth responded to the address from the member of the public.**

This bridge has long been part of the policy and placemaking proposals for the West End, all of which have been consulted on widely and at length, debated in Full Council, and then adopted as formal documents.

**The West End Area Action Plan**, adopted by the City Council in June 2008, sought “A new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Thames to join Oxpens Field to the Thames towpath is proposed. This would link the West End to Osney Mead and the West Oxford Cycle Route. Improvements will also be made to the route running east from the pedestrian bridge.

The key document of the then Local Plan, the **Oxford Core Strategy**, was adopted in March 2011. It made clear that it sought “A new Thames cycle and pedestrian bridge” in this area.

In November 2013 the **Oxpens SPD** – Supplementary Planning Document, something which provides further, detailed guidance to supplement existing policies within a Local Plan – was adopted by the City Council. This explains in detail what is proposed and what the objectives are for the new bridge.

“A new bridge crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably the Grandpont Nature Reserve, and residential areas up/down stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan. The exact location of the bridge is to be determined and the Environment Agency must be consulted on the design.”

The maps that are the Development Framework Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan in the 2013 **Oxpens SPD** include the proposed bridge in almost exactly the location for which planning permission was submitted and approved.

The current **Oxford Local Plan 2036** was adopted by Oxford City Council in June 2020. Policy SP2 says “The masterplan [for the Oxpens site] should consider in greater detail how and when a new pedestrian and cycle bridge will be delivered linking this site with the other side of the river.”

The current detailed Supplementary Planning Document for this area is the **West End and Osney Mead SPD**, which was adopted by Oxford City Council in November 2022. It says that the ‘Oxpens River Bridge’ is one of the “Key Infrastructure priorities in relation to movement” for the site.

The bridge that has been proposed, consulted on and whose principle has been part of numerous formal policies adopted by this Council for twenty years now has planning permission and technical approval for the structure and a route has been identified to deliver the bridge. Grandpont Nature Park will remain for the very most part entirely unaltered. The proposals will deliver biodiversity net gain and maintain the level of tree canopy cover in the area in accordance with national and local planning policies.

The path through Grandpont is already well used and with further development in the West End the level of use is forecast to increase. Work was done to look at the options to floodproof the tow path under the rail bridge but they have not been taken forward as there is not yet funding available for them. That does not mean the route will not continue to be used the rest of the time, and the pathworks and the proposed bridge will provide an attractive and legible route across the river to the city centre.

The other bridges across the Thames will remain. The potential to improve the Gasworks Rail bridge was considered by the County Council in 2016-17 and discounted as a workable option. Further review has highlighted considerable

challenges, particularly with the footpath alongside Castle Mill Stream which is too narrow to accommodate cycling and the alternative route over the Castle Mill Stream bridge which would require alterations to create a hardened path and altered levels across the protected Meadow.

The Council procured Balfour Beatty through the local authority framework known as the S.C.A.P.E. to undertake pre-construction services as part of the preparation of the project and the planning process. The local authority framework carries out vetting work on all contractors that it works with. The City Council will pursue a tendering process for a contractor for the construction of the bridge through another standard framework that includes a competitive process.

The proposed bridge provides the opportunity for a new and convenient route across the river, designed specifically for the location and to support the placemaking that will support the development of the West End as a vibrant quarter of the city and connect to other parts of Oxford to the south and west of the city centre. As were the objectives of the bridge first proposed by this Council 20 years ago.