

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Council on Monday 24 November 2025**

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## **Committee 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 Jarvis	Councillor Jupp
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Latif
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Malik
Councillor Miles	Councillor Morris
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	

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

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services  
Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive - Place  
Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director  
Mish Tullar, Transition Manager  
Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Nerys Parry, Director of Housing  
James Watkins, Housing Policy and Projects Officer

## **47. Tributes**

The Chair invited Council to observe a minute silence in memory of former Councillor Roy Darke.

The Lord Mayor invited tributes from Members of the Council.

Councillor Lygo commented on his time working alongside Roy Darke in a variety of roles and noted appreciation for his sense of humour and calming influence. Councillor Lygo reflected on their time spent canvassing, and his visits to Roy's home where he was always warmly welcomed.

Councillor Altaf-Khan reflected on his time living as a neighbour to Roy Darke and the relationship they had developed over more than twenty years. Councillor Altaf-Khan reflected on Roy's work and achievements within the communities he served.

*Councillor Mundy joined the meeting.*

Councillor Chapman reflected on his friendship with Roy Darke and the mentorship he had been provided through this. Personally, Councillor Chapman thanked Roy for his support, highlighted many of his achievements, and reflected on his decency, good heart, and enthusiasm for life.

*Councillor Jupp and Councillor Railton joined the meeting.*

Councillor Malik commended Roy Darke's work as the Chair of the Planning Committee and praised his well measured nature.

Councillor Clarkson reflected on Roy Darke's kind and generous nature, noting the benefits that the communities of Oxford experienced as a result. Councillor Clarkson commended Roy's successful work across councils and reflected on his modesty, integrity, and loyalty throughout. She thanked Roy and his wife for always welcoming her to their home and providing guidance and company.

*Councillor Corais joined the meeting.*

Councillor Henwood reflected on Roy Darke's personable and approachable character as a councillor and for the mentorship he had provided.

Councillor Taylor reflected on Roy Darke's career as a councillor, noting many of his achievements and efforts. On a personal level, Councillor Taylor thanked Roy and his wife for their support and care when he required a place to live in recent years.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini highlighted that Roy Darke had been a man of principle and reflected on his many achievements, noting her wish that his memories bring solace.

Councillor Rowley reflected on the last time he had seen Roy Darke and his positive and cheerful nature; despite the challenges he had been facing. Councillor Rowley also reflected on the wide range of skills and interests Roy had and his hard work as a councillor.

#### **48. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Hunt sent apologies.

Councillor Turner and Councillor Roz Smith would be late.

#### **49. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Gant declared his role as a County Councillor and noted that he would leave the meeting for items 18a, 18d, and 18e.

#### **50. Minutes**

Council resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meetings held on 6 October 2025 as a true and accurate record.

#### **51. Appointment to Committees**

There were no new appointments to committees.

#### **52. Announcements**

The Lord Mayor informed Council that since its last meeting she had attended an openair event which raised £3000 for the homeless, had enjoyed coffee with Greek and Estonian ambassadors, and had invited local schoolgirls to an event with a Rugby World Cup winner in the Town Hall. The Lord Mayor also informed Council that throughout Remembrance Sunday events, thanks had been given to those who put themselves in danger to protect the public, including the armed services and emergency services. Council was reminded that Remembrance Sunday is a time to show solidarity with European neighbours and friends.

*Councillor Roz Smith joined the meeting.*

The City Rector noted the tributes to former Councillor Roy Darke and reflected on the death of President JF Kennedy in 1963 as a passing which shook the world and Oxford residents. The City Rector also commented on the historic passings of Huxley, CS Lewis, and Freddie Mercury.

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

There were no addresses or questions.

### **54. Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

### **55. HRA Policies**

The Director of Housing had submitted a report to approve the HRA Policies, following the recommendation from Cabinet on 22 October 2025.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, outlining that the policy framework would support the safety of residents in council-owned homes and maintain the upkeep of the housing stock. Council also heard that the policies are designed to meet the high standards of the Regulator for Social Housing and new statutory obligations which have been imposed since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 and the death of Awaab Ishak in 2020. Councillor Linda Smith referred Members to the stipulation for all emergency cases of damp and mould to be dealt with within 24 hours and outlined the necessary process for this. Finally, Council heard that a new strategy for resident involvement will be brought forward to the next meeting of Cabinet; this was summarised, and it was confirmed that all policies brought to Council will have had resident feedback.

Councillor Fouweather welcomed the report and asked whether the entire Council Housing stock had been reviewed within the 5 years, as per the requirement noted in the report. Councillor Linda Smith explained that this has not yet been completed but noted that it is ongoing process, and all flats have been surveyed.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini welcomed the report and queried how better engagement with housing associations could be supported in relation to damp and mould issues. Councillor Linda Smith clarified that the report before Council relates only to the council-owned housing stock which does not include housing association properties, however explained that if damp and mould is present with housing association homes, then contact can be made with the Council's residential regulation team who can take up enforcement action as required.

Councillor Smowton requested clarification in relation to e-bikes at council-owned properties. Councillor Linda Smith offered to set out more detail in writing but summarised that the Council does not wish for e-bikes to be stored within council-owned properties and instead recommends residents to use outside storage units to manage fire risks.

Councillor Roz Smith welcomed the policy on e-bikes but asked how those who are not supplied with sufficiently sized storage for e-bikes and mobility scooters outside may be penalised by this policy. Council heard that external storage units must be fit for purpose. Councillor Linda Smith agreed and noted her support for the points raised; she requested information on specific areas or properties experiencing this issue to ensure it can be raised with the appropriate officers.

Councillor Miles asked whether data is available which demonstrates the proportion of the housing stock, specifically flats, where bike parking is provided. If not, it was asked that this data gap be filled to ensure targeted provision of required facilities. Councillor Linda Smith committed to providing the information in writing.

Councillor Linda Smith moved the report; Councillor Brown seconded.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the Damp and Mould Policy
2. **Approve** the Fire Safety Policy
3. **Approve** the Asbestos Policy
4. **Approve** the Disrepair Policy

## **56. Local Government Reorganisation**

The Chief Executive had submitted a report to note the decision of Cabinet with regards to Oxford City Council's Local Government Reorganisation preferred option submission

Councillor Brown introduced the report and thanked both officers who had contributed to the report, and those who had maintained the running of normal Council services simultaneously. Councillor Brown thanked Council for making the process as inclusive and cross-party in nature as possible. Council understood that the proposal had now been submitted, and a summary of its strengths were provided. Councillor Brown thanked Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee for its support.

Councillor Jarvis clarified that whilst the Scrutiny Committee did support the submission of the proposal to Government, it did not unanimously support the proposal itself.

Councillor Smowton asked whether the Leader of the Council had read a recent article from the Local Government Chronicle which described a potential legal challenge to Local Government Reorganisation and boundaries. Councillor Brown noted that having read multiple relevant articles, she is aware of some discussion regarding the legal basis on which local government boundaries may be changed but confirmed that the Council is confident that proposal submitted has taken every precaution and has made relevant legal considerations.

*Councillor Turner joined the meeting.*

Councillor Malik asked the Leader of the Council how many MPs and other Council leaders in Oxfordshire have supported Oxford City Council's bid. Councillor Brown confirmed that 2 MPs are supportive of the three unitary proposal, and noted that she had spoken to all MPs, including those in surrounding areas. Members were reminded that other local councils have put forward alternative bids.

Councillor Roz Smith queried how it has been envisioned that larger services, such as social care and children's services, will be managed and delivered, noting the wide scope of partnership working with the NHS trust. Councillor Brown emphasised that several options for this have been outlined in the proposal, including some combining of services and more local operations to reflect the varying needs of geographical areas.

*Councillor Regisford joined the meeting.*

Councillor Rehman emphasised that more open and transparent governance with a local focus must be the central priority of the proposal and that residents must be put first on matters such as housing to ensure public confidence.

Councillor Malik noted his support for unitary structures instead of two-tier governance systems as currently exist. He noted a belief that this provides better value for money to the taxpayer and is less confusing. Council heard that he did not support the three-unitary proposal.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini expressed concern that Local Government Reorganisation, may lead to the loss of Healthwatch, a valuable health scrutiny mechanism. Therefore, it was asked whether any of the options proposed provide more scrutiny hope for social care. Councillor Brown advised that the matter would be more appropriately raised in relation to devolution but explained that regardless of which proposal is accepted by government, work will remain ongoing with health partners to maintain the positive record that Oxford City Council has developed historically. In the context of devolution, it was noted that the oversight for health would likely sit with the Mayoral Strategic Authority.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked whether the Leader of the Council had any evidence which shows what the optimal population size for an authority would be; specifically, whether there is evidence that larger and fewer authorities work more effectively. Councillor Brown confirmed that evidence does show the optimum size of a council to be around 250,000 to 350,000 which is what the three-unitary proposal sets out. Furthermore, evidence also suggests that beyond a population of 500,000, a council is less likely to be efficient.

Council resolved to **note** the decision taken by Cabinet on the 10 November to submit as its preferred option on Local Government Reorganisation, a three unitary council model across Oxfordshire, incorporating West Berkshire, as set out in the Cabinet Report.

## **57. Devolution**

*The meeting was adjourned due to an ongoing protest in the Public Gallery in the Chamber at 17.57.*

*The meeting resumed at 18.01.*

The Lord Mayor emphasised that Council welcomes public speakers however proper procedure must be followed and requests to speak must be submitted in advance.

Councillor Turner commented on the unexpected comments from members of the public in the gallery and noted that whilst they were directed to him, he was unprepared to speak in response. Council was also informed that he had previously corresponded with the organisation in question and offered a meeting which had not yet been accepted.

Councillor Jarvis, Councillor Mundy and Councillor Rawle declared their membership of the organisation who had conducted the protest in the Chamber but noted being unaware of any plans for the interruption at this meeting.

The Chief Executive had submitted a report to note that Cabinet will take a decision on whether to endorse the submission by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of all Oxfordshire councils of an Expression of Interest to Government for the inclusion of the Thames Valley area in the next wave of its Devolution Programme.

Councillor Brown introduced the report and outlined the potential of a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority. Members were informed that engagement in repeat discussions is ongoing and the report before Council sets out a letter to government which express interest in being part of a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority. It was explained that as a district council, Oxford City Council is not

able to directly write to government and is therefore supporting a letter from Oxfordshire County Council.

*Councillor Kerr left the meeting during this item.*

Council **noted** that a Special Cabinet on 4 December will be asked to:

- a. Endorse the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions to a future Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority, and agrees to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date;
- b. Endorse the Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted by Oxfordshire County Council as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme;
- c. Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority;
- d. Agree that a further report will be brought to Cabinet prior to any final decision by Oxfordshire County Council as upper-tier authority on the creation of a Strategic Authority; and
- e. Note an informal Devolution Programme Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process.

## **58. Updates to Constitution**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy had submitted a report to seek approval for amendments to the Constitution, including updated Committee procedures and confirmation that Council will be responsible for approving Taxi Licensing policy.

Lord Mayor noted a correction to the report; reference to part 5.4 of the constitution should be replaced with part 5.6.

Councillor Brown introduced the report and outlined the amendments to the constitution, acknowledging and accepting Councillor Smowton's amendment:

- In the proposed new text for 12.10, after "must stick to the submitted address", insert "except with the Chair's permission"
- In the proposed new text for 13.16, after "must stick to the submitted address", insert "except with the Chair's permission"
- In the proposed new text for 14.8, after "must stick to the submitted address", insert "except with the Chair's permission"

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



*Councillor Kerr rejoined the meeting.*

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the reservation to full Council of the decision making and approval of Taxi Licensing Policy as set out in Part 5.6 of the Constitution
2. **Approve** the updates to the Constitution, as listed in Appendix 1 as amended;
3. **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.

**59. Recommendation from the Standards Committee to censure Councillor Malik**

The Monitoring Officer had submitted a report regarding the outcome of the Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee that found that Councillor Malik had breached the Council's Code of Member Conduct and that the sanction imposed should be the formal censure of the full Council.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the report, and the considerations required of Council. Members were informed that the recommendation to Council follows from a determination made by a Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee in relation to a complaint made against Councillor Malik.

Councillor Pressel moved the report; Councillor Diggins seconded.

Councillor Mundy noted his support for the recommendation but emphasised that the standards procedure in relation to engagement between councillors should also take account of the fact that robust engagement is not always welcomed however unreasonable conduct should be identified. Councillor Mundy also noted that the code of conduct also applies to councillors responding to members of the public who are often unaware of the code of conduct, and less likely to make a complaint.

Councillor Henwood noted disappointment in the Standards Committee and insufficiency of the findings against Councillor Malik.

Councillor Malik addressed Council and referred to other example of behaviour he viewed to be comparable from councillors which had not been addressed by the Standards Committee. Councillor Malik considered the role of the Chair and previous Lord Mayor in the events leading to the complaint against him.

The Lord Mayor advised Councillor Malik to refer to the report before Council only.

Councillor Smowton declared that as husband of Councillor Railton, who is related to the complaint, he would not be voting on the recommendation.

Councillor Djafari-Marbini commented that to increase confidence in the Standards Committee, an update should be made to allow independent persons to vote.

The Monitoring Officer explained that there are no provisions for Independent Persons to vote in the relevant statutory provisions however this is being considered by the government consultation.

Councillor Arshad, in response to comments from Councillor Malik, asserted that as Lord Mayor at the time of events leading to the complaint in question, she disagreed with the notion she had not lost control of the meeting. She also provided further reflections on the substance of the complaint.

Councillor Miles commented that as a woman in politics, she acknowledged Councillor Arshad's comments.

Upon being put to a vote, the recommendation was agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Censure** Councillor Malik in respect of the finding that he breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

**60. Recommendation from the Standards Committee to censure Councillor Latif**

The Monitoring Officer had submitted a report regarding the Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee that found that Councillor Latif had breached the Council's Code of Member Conduct and that the sanction imposed should be the formal censure of the full Council.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the report, and the considerations required of Council. Members were informed that the recommendation to Council follows from a determination made by a Local Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee in relation to a complaint made against Councillor Latif.

Councillor Pressel moved the report; Councillor Diggins seconded.

Councillor Latif thanked the legal advisor to the Local Hearing Panel, and the members of the Local Hearing Panel for their decision.

The Lord Mayor intervened and reminded Councillor Latif to refer to the report before Council only.

Councillor Latif persisted in making comments unrelated to the report before Council. Councillor Latif's microphone was switched off.

Upon being put to a vote, the recommendation was agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Censure** Councillor Latif in respect of the finding that he breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

## **61. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

### **a. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 October 2025**

Councillor Miles asked how Cabinet is reconciling the inconsistencies within the draft of the Air Quality Action Plan which is framed around transport initiatives of the County Council that it publicly does not support. Councillor Miles also requested clarification on the level of compliance under the existing regime of HMO licensing and what is being done to manage noncompliance. Councillor Railton, in regards the Air Quality Action Plan, explained that the City Council does not have the statutory duty to deliver on transport matters and clarified that many elements of the draft are still subject to public consultation meaning that scope and design may evolve. Councillor Linda Smith, in relation to HMO licensing, shared that enforcement action is taking place and that compliance rates have been improving as a result as prohibition orders are issued. It was also noted that compliance from landlords is key to improve standards.

Councillor Mundy, in relation to the new charge applied for visitors to the museum, asked what would constitute a minor change and what future outcomes would necessitate major changes. Councillor Hollingsworth explained that a minor change may include expanding the recipients of the various discounts, and a major change may be the subsidies agreed by Council for the museum in the future.

*Councillor Malik left the meeting during this discussion.*

Councillor Turner, in response to Councillor Mundy, also noted that discounts for youth groups and school groups could be a consideration to support those on benefits or with no recourse to public funds.

Councillor Henwood asked if there could be a tiered ticketing system according to age at the Museum, noting that there was an absence of data when the prices were decided. Councillor Hollingworth confirmed that no data was available at the time of price setting as no tickets had yet been issued and therefore decisions were based on an estimated guess. Council was assured that once ticket sales are in operation, data will be available which may confirm, or dispute estimates and adaptations can be made on this basis.

*Councillor Malik rejoined the meeting.*

**b. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 November 2025**

There were no questions on these minutes.

**c. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19 November 2025**

Councillor Goddard asked whether the deferral of Hackney Carriage Emission Standards would risk disadvantaging those who have already invested in electric vehicles. Councillor Railton noted that when speaking to taxi drivers, most have been content with this decision and many who had already converted have benefited from grants and cheaper energy prices.

*Councillor Sandelson left the meeting during this discussion and did not return.*

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

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

These along with summaries of the 19 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 discussion.

*Following the conclusion of this item Council adjourned and took a break from 19.02 to 19.33.*

*Councillor Sandelson, Councillor Altaf-Khan, and Councillor Gant did not return following the break.*

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

Council heard 1 address and Councillor Hollingsworth responded.

*Councillor Turner rejoined the meeting during the address.*

The address and response are set out in full in the minutes pack.

### **64. Scrutiny Committee update report**

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

Councillor Powell, as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, summarised the report. Councillor Powell informed Council of the content of the recent meetings, included a special meeting to consider local government organisation, as well as two regular meetings. Councillor Powell thanked officers and Cabinet members for attending. Councillor Powell referred Council to the report.

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

### **65. Motions on notice November 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:

18b. Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Cllr Mundy, Seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)

#### Motions taken but lost:

18a. Oppose a Work Place Parking Levy and planned Bus Gates in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Henwood, seconded Cllr Yeatman)

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

18c. Democracy and Freedom (proposed by Cllr Rehman, seconded by Cllr Latif)

18d. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (proposed by Cllr Jupp, seconded by Cllr Miles)

18e. A World-Class Multi-Modal Transport Hub for Oxford Station (Proposed by Cllr. Lois Muddiman, Seconded by Cllr. Emily Kerr)

**66. Oppose a Work Place Parking Levy and planned Bus Gates in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Henwood, seconded Cllr Yeatman)**

Councillor Henwood requested a named vote for motion 18a. The Lord Mayor asked if Council wished to proceed with a named vote; 10 Councillors indicated in favour of a named vote. Council committed to a named vote on motion 18a.

Councillor Henwood, seconded by Councillor Yeatman, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

*Councillor Morris and Councillor Waite left and rejoined the meeting during this debate of this motion.*

Following the debate a recorded vote was taken:

***For the resolution set out below:***

*Councillors: Azad, Harley, Henwood, Latif, Malik, Rehman, Stares, Yeatman (8)*

***Against the resolution***

*Councillors: Fouweather, Goddard, Jarvis, Jupp, Kerr, Miles, Morris, Muddiman, Mundy, Powell, Rawle, Regisford, Robinson, R Smith, Smowton (15)*

***Abstentions:***

*Councillors: Arshad, Brown, Chapman, Clarkson, Corais, Diggins, Djafari-Marbini, Fry, Hollingworth, Lygo, Munkonge, Ottino, Pressel, Qayyum, Railton, Rowley, Taylor, Turner, Upton, Waite (20)*

With more Councillors voting against, the motion **fell**.

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

Oxford City Council notes that Oxfordshire County Council has approved and expressed support for:

1. The proposed Bus gate (filter) scheme;
2. The proposed Workplace Parking Levy (WPL);

Oxford City Council further notes significant public concern regarding the potential economic, social, and accessibility impacts of these measures on residents, businesses, and visitors. Council therefore resolves to:

1. Oppose for the proposed Bus Gate (filter) Scheme, and the proposed Workplace Parking Levy.
2. Request the Leader of the Council to write to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant authorities as the local highways authority to communicate this resolution.
3. Continue to support sustainable, balanced approaches to improving air quality, public transport, and cycling/walking infrastructure that do not unduly penalise residents, workers, or businesses.

## **67. Bring Thames Water into public ownership (Proposed by Cllr Mundy, Seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)**

Councillor Mundy, seconded by Councillor Djafari-Marbini, proposed the motion as set out in the briefing note.

*Councillor Arshad, Councillor Taylor, Councillor Diggins, and Councillor Pressel left and rejoined the meeting during the debate of this motion.*

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

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

Thames Water has become known for poor performance for managing their vital infrastructure. Having managed to discharge raw sewage into the region's waterways for almost 300,000 hours in 2024<sup>1</sup>, the company faced record breaking fines from Ofwat this year. In an ironic twist, Thames Water pleaded poverty when negotiating the fine downwards- committing to paying less than 20% of the £122.7 million fine within the next four and a half years. A fine made larger and of course less affordable by the £170 million in dividends paid out over the last two years.<sup>2</sup> The failure of water companies across the country is being rewarded with huge executive salaries: The average pay for water company CEOs in 2022 was £1.7 million.<sup>3</sup> A natural monopoly like water should be publicly owned. According to The People's Commission on the Water Sector, the environment secretary's claims that taking water back into public ownership is unaffordable, was backed by misleading figures with no basis in law.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/mar/18/thames-water-data-reveals-raw-sewage-discharges-rivers-2024> Thames Water data reveals raw sewage discharges in rivers rose 50% in 2024. The Guardian 18/03/2025

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2025-08-27/thames-water-negotiates-payment-plan-following-record-fine> Thames Water negotiates payment plan following record £122.7 million fine. ITV Meridian 27/08/2025

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/fat-cat-water-firm-bosses-26229950> EXCLUSIVE: 'Fat cat' water firm bosses earn £15m as amount of raw sewage dumped in rivers rockets. Daily Mirror 15/02/2022

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/aug/03/a-fair-price-to-the-public-for-water-nationalisation> A fair price to the public for water nationalisation

People of Oxford are fed up of polluted waterways that used to be fit for leisure activities, fed up of aging burst water pipes flooding our streets<sup>5</sup>, and dismayed at the daft plans for an enormous reservoir which tears up local landscape and is costly and un-necessary.<sup>6</sup>

Yes, we have been here before, our Council passed a motion pushing for the nationalisation of Thames Water back in January 2023. But the Labour government still chooses not to take bold action to take back control of our water supply, deciding instead that a new regulator will solve the problems. Our Council has the opportunity to push for a rethink, to urge the government to renationalise Thames Water.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Leader of the Council writes to Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Emma Reynolds, with Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Water and Flooding Emma Hardy, stating that water privatisation has failed the people of Oxford and that our water supplier needs to be brought in to public hands.
- Ask the Planning cabinet member to write to Thames Water CEO seeking:
  - An explanation for the deplorable state of our water infrastructure. Asking, why our city suffered so much disruption from burst water mains this summer, and what is being done to ensure that the same won't be repeated.
  - A resolution of when we will see an end to routine (outside of recognised extreme wet weather conditions) dumping of raw sewerage overflow into Oxford's local waterways.
  - An urgent timetable of when sewage works in The Leys and Littlemore will be modernised and brought up to capacity to prevent the annual stench across these areas in the summer months.
- For Oxford City Council to engage with local groups such as Windrush Against Sewage Pollution and Boycott Thames Water, to push for better standards from our water supplier.

## **68. Democracy and Freedom (proposed by Cllr Rehman, seconded by Cllr Latif)**

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

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c79qr333jv4o> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwyj7ldw14eo> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cr5v223epnlo> and <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-2750371/Video-Oxford-City-Centre-suffers-water-pipe-burst-UK-hosepipe-ban.html> BBC and Daily Mail Summer 2025

<sup>6</sup> <https://theconversation.com/the-uk-is-surprisingly-short-of-water-but-more-reservoirs-arent-the-answer-243440> The UK is surprisingly short of water – but more reservoirs aren't the answer. The Conversation 01/13/2025



**69. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (proposed by Cllr Jupp, seconded by Cllr Miles)**

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

**70. A World-Class Multi-Modal Transport Hub for Oxford Station (Proposed by Cllr Lois Muddiman, Seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr)**

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

**The meeting started at 5.03 pm and ended at 8.39 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Monday 26 January 2026**

*When decisions take effect:*

*Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued.*

*All other committees: immediately.*

*Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

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**To:** Council  
**Date:** 24 November 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 Mundy to Cllr Brown

#### Question

Why does the "Media Roundup" email not include stats on Twitter/ X? Is the Council getting meaningful engagement on X, and is a review of the use of the platform being considered?

#### Written Response

The Media Roundup is an internal document shared with managers and councillors at Oxford City Council. Through the weekly social media data, the Communications Team aims to provide insight into what is working on our channels. Due to capacity, the data currently focuses on our main platforms: Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. We could also provide data for LinkedIn, YouTube and NextDoor.

We continually review our use of social media, including through consultations with Oxford residents via the Residents' Panel and engagement on the platforms themselves. Recent consultations show a preference among younger residents for short-form video, so over the past year we have prioritised Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Mainly due to capacity, we have deprioritised more text-based platforms like X, Bluesky and NextDoor. This may change in the future.

<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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**SB2: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Brown**
**Question**

Should the congestion charge show no reduction in the cities overall air quality would you commit to oppose traffic filters?

**Written Response**

There needs to be a thorough review of the impact of the county's various traffic schemes, including their interaction with each other. The priorities should be reducing congestion, making public transport flow more freely, improving air quality and improving the experiences of cyclists and pedestrians. We also need to rebuild confidence in our communities in an overall transport plan which means engagement with residents and businesses.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**
**SB3: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Brown**
**Question**

Congestion charged routes are essentially traffic filters.  
I value your principal on the charge which discriminates against the least well off in our city.  
Given the burden and fines of the filters will essentially be felt by oxford residents.  
Do you have any proposals you are pushing for which will at least allow the city to benefit financially from filter fines, especially as we have seen with the congestion

**Written Response**

We specifically asked the County Council if they insisted on going ahead with the congestion charge to use some of the money they raised to subsidise bus fares for those in our city. They have chosen to do that only for residents outside the city and then only for a few months.

charge free park and ride buses which on the whole have no benefit to oxford residents?  For example, free bus travel for school children	
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>SB4: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b>  Have the usual processes of sending decisions made by the General Purposes Licensing Committee (GPL) and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee (LGA) to Full Council for approval, recently changed - and if so how and why?	<b>LGA:</b>  We have had advice which confirms that there is a distinction between policy that needs to come to Full Council and the saturation / cumulative impact assessment and policy. The latter is a decision to be taken by Committee but has previously been sent to Full Council for approval due to an ambiguity in the Licensing Act 2003 as to what constitutes licensing policy. Amendments to the Constitution to reflect this are part of the agenda for this Council meeting.  <b>GPL:</b>  Advice to the Council is that there needs to be a clear decision of full Council to keep taxi licensing as a responsibility of Full Council as a result of case law. This has never been done and advice is approval of the provisions as part of the constitution is insufficient. This has led to a report on the Council agenda to reaffirm this but, in the meantime, a report went to Cabinet to ensure that a decision on Taxi Licensing was ratified, following recommendation of the GPL to Council which had to be withdrawn from the last Council agenda. This is a belt and braces approach to ensure that the original intention of both our constitution and the licensing committee's decision are respected.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>	<b>Verbal Response</b>

Councillor Muddiman queried whether the Leader of the Council had been aware of any whipping ahead of the latest Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee meeting.	Councillor Brown referred Councillor Muddiman to the legal advice already provided regarding whipping and policy decisions.
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<b>SB5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder give full details of the interim scheme which Thames Water will introduce in 2027 to provide wastewater capacity which was agreed by Oxford City Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water in March?	<b>Written Response</b> Thames Water publish a quarterly report on their website detailing their progress so far, as well as holding regular updates with the Local Planning Authorities and developers. Works are reported by Thames Water to be on track to deliver both the short term and long-term improvements needed. The full report can be found here: <a href="#">Performance and annual results   About us   Thames Water</a>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>SB6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Brown</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder provide full details of the latest advice from the Environment Agency regarding the capacity of the Oxford Sewage Treatment works, following the scheme agreed in March 2025?	<b>Written Response</b> No further advice has been issued to us by the EA since they wrote to the LPA providing revised guidance on this matter.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

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

**ET1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Turner**

**Question**

The “Greater Oxford” Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation has been prepared by the Cabinet and Council Officers. Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council:

1. What funding has been provided by national Government?
2. How much has been spent from Council funds and from which budget?

How much has been spent in total (including officer time, all forms of advertising, and consultancy) from all sources of funding?

**Written Response**

Government provided £90,000 in funding to support the development of LGR proposals. It has been clear that the main costs of implementation of proposals should be borne by existing and new councils themselves and recouped through the delivery of efficiencies from the creation of new unitary structures.

In the period since April 2025 the Council has spent £288,000 on the LGR work, from its General Fund budget.

Subject to Cabinet decision, Oxford City Council will consult on a proposed £2m provision in its 2026/27 Budget as its contribution towards the costs of LGR and devolution. Oxfordshire County Council has already made a provision of £10m to contribute towards these costs, and the other district councils are expected similarly to make Budget provisions.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Fouweather asked the Cabinet Member to confirm that the decision to spend £288,000 was agreed in accordance with the constitution and reported to Council, noting that it was not included within the budget.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Turner offered to write to Councillor Fouweather on the matter, noting that he was not aware of any relevant issues with the process.



**ET2: From Cllr R Smith to Cllr Turner****Question**

Regarding the BDO audit report given at the Audit & Governance meeting on 21st October, which evaluated the quality of Fire Risk Assessments conducted by contractors: BDO reported the contractor BrightHeat subcontracted 217 fire risk assessments to Guardian Consultancy Services, who further subcontracted to Hawk Fire Safety Services and VM Fire Safety Services. Is the practice of multi-layer subcontracting common in City Council contracts, and are you satisfied that we have sufficient accountability from our direct contractor?

**Written Response**

In terms of the contract with BrightHeat, I can confirm that all contracts relating to Fire Risk Assessments have been terminated, and the activity has been brought in-house via a specialist fire safety team. This gives the Council the necessary control and assurance required. More broadly, all specifications should stipulate that there should be no sub-contracting of work without the explicit consent of the client.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response****ET3: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Turner****Question**

Can the portfolio holder give details as to how the £16,000 assigned to flowers in Frideswide Square in the 2024 budget has been spent?

**Written Response**

Due to the construction works currently taking place to replace the Botley Road Bridge, works to improve the planters at Frideswide Square has been deferred. There are however discussions taking place around improvements to the planters and responsibility for long term maintenance so they are improved for when the works in the area are complete.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

AR1: From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Railton	
<b>Question</b> <p>Is the Council willing to provide a bench for visitors to the Jewish section of the Wolvercote cemetery?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>We are often asked for benches in all the cemeteries, including the Jewish section at Wolvercote, but haven't installed any for several years due to the intense pressure on the limited remaining burial space.</p> <p>The Jewish section at Wolvercote is the only area in all the cemeteries with any significant burial space left, so a bench could be installed there if someone was prepared to fund it.</p> <p>However, we are already having to remove existing benches from other areas of the cemetery to make space for burials (a bench is about the size of a grave), so installing a bench in one area at a time of removing them from other areas doesn't seem sensible.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>None.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b>
AR2: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton	
<b>Question</b> <p>Does the administration of this city council support the traffic filters policy agreed by the county council in November 2022?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Does the administration of the County Council support the traffic filters policy THEY agreed in 2022?</p> <p>They have just implemented a different policy that wasn't advertised in the Lib Dem manifesto and nor were the residents, businesses nor even the City Council consulted on it.</p>

<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant asked the Cabinet Member whether the administration supports the policy or not, noting that it has done in the past.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Railton encouraged future conversation regarding the matter.
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<b>AR3: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> When the administration of this council chose to oppose the congestion charge, what account did you take of the well-publicised synergies between congestion reduction and the deployment of 159 zero-emission buses, as set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan's accompanying delivery plan?	<b>Written Response</b> We have been asking the County Council for several years now to take measures to reduce congestion and improve bus times during the period that the Botley Road has remained closed. We have suggested a number of different measures from more school streets, working with Oxford's many private schools to reduce traffic to schools, other bus priority measures and subsidising bus travel.  The county council chose instead to introduce a measure without even discussing it with the City Council.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant asked the Cabinet Member what matters were taken into consideration when choosing not to support the congestion charge.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Railton noted that it is not a decision for Oxford City Council to make.

<b>AR4: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> Do you welcome the significant gains in bus services delivered by the newly-implemented congestion charge, including those from rural parts of the county into Oxford? Similarly, do you welcome the delivery of	<b>Written Response</b> When we responded to the county council's surprise announcement of a congestion charge, we specifically said that revenue from the scheme should be used in the city to subsidise bus services. That is the opposite of

free bus travel from the Park and Rides for three months?	<p>the decision you took as cabinet member on the county council, which is to use some of the money raised to subsidise people from outside the city.</p> <p>I am not aware that any data has yet been published on the impact of the congestion charge. While increased use of bus services would be one measure to look at, air quality across the whole city, congestion moving and the impact on different communities would also be important to look at too.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Gant asked the Cabinet Member whether or not she agreed that it is positive for park and ride buses to be free of charge to those who live outside of Oxford and travel in.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Railton noted that this can advantage those living outside the city ahead of local Oxford City residents.</p>

**AR5: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton**

<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Does this administration stand by its previously-expressed belief that traffic filters, a Zero Emission Zone and a Workplace Parking Levy contribute towards improving air quality, as set out on the 2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report's Table 3, "Progress on Measures to Improve Air Quality"? Does this extend to your welcoming overall improvements to air quality predicted to be delivered by the congestion charge?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The question misunderstands the Air Quality Annual Report. The measures are in the report because they are the solutions offered by the County Council as the transport authority and we have a statutory duty to measure air quality.</p> <p>This council would welcome an opportunity for the residents of this city to have an input into transport policy that impacts them.</p>
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<b>Supplementary Question:</b> <p>Councillor Gant asked the Cabinet Member whether the administration continues to support improving air quality in the city via the measures listed in the original question.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>Councillor Railton noted that the question related to matters of transport policy which are under the control of Oxfordshire County Council.</p>
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<b>AR6: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Oxford City Council will receive additional revenue from increased parking at the Park and Ride sites after bus services were made free of charge following introduction of the congestion charge, if this change results in enhanced uptake. The administration obviously considered this when deciding to oppose the charge, and concluded that it neither wanted nor needed this income. What, therefore, will happen to it?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>I am not aware of any data yet that shows the impact of the congestion charge on car park income at the Park &amp; Ride sites, nor our city centre car parks. If there is increased income at the park and ride car parks that may well offset loss of income from city centre car parks.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>Councillor Gant asked the Cabinet Member what the income listed in the original response is used for.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>Councillor Railton explained that as there is no data yet, and therefore the impact on the city centre car parks is currently unknown.</p>

<b>AR7: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Are there any plans being looked into for an East Oxford Park and Ride?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Any new Park &amp; Ride provision is for the County Council to consider as part of its wider transport strategy. The site allocation for land south of Grenoble Road within South Oxfordshire's Local Plan currently includes an area safeguarded for a Park &amp; Ride on this site.</p>

	There are no plans for a new park and ride within the current city boundary.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AR8: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> If the Cabinet decides to give Hackney Carriage drivers an indefinite extension to the date by which they must make the switch to electric vehicles, does the portfolio holder believe that the Council would be becoming less ambitious in its drive to reduce CO2 emissions in the city?"	<b>Written Response</b> No. The main CO2 emissions sector for the City is buildings emissions. The cost of requiring all Hackney carriages to migrate to electric would be a minimum of £2.5M investment for the trade (assuming second hand outright purchase, higher if leased or new), for a saving of a fraction of a percentage in carbon emissions.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AR9: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> Are we monitoring the impact of the congestion charge on air quality on the roads with the congestion charge and the roads where traffic been displaced to?	<b>Written Response</b> The city council has a statutory duty to measure air pollution annually. Currently, it measures NO <sub>2</sub> at three locations using automatic continuous monitors and at 77 locations using passive diffusion tubes. Since 2023, an additional 44 diffusion tubes have been installed to strengthen the network and help assess (at the time) the impacts of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and also to establish the baseline air quality levels for the future traffic filter trials.

	<p>These locations were chosen based on specific air quality modelling commissioned by County, targeting areas with the greatest potential for impact and traffic displacement. The selection process was the result of a collaborative effort between the City's air quality officer and the County's traffic filter planning team.</p> <p>Because the congestion charge has been introduced in the same areas where traffic filter trials are expected, the expanded monitoring network is currently well positioned to evaluate its effects, and no extra monitoring is required. However, analysing changes in air quality is complex, as many factors influence pollutant concentrations. Since the congestion charge was only recently implemented, a minimum of one year of monitoring is required to accurately assess the magnitude of any changes.</p> <p>There will only be two months of data covering the introduction of the congestion charge in the 2025 air quality report that will come out in June 2026; the rest will be in June 2027.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AR10: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b>  An update on the burial site at Horspath Village adjacent to the athletics club please	<b>Written Response</b>  City officers are working to find resolution to a county highways objection to the scheme. It will then go to South Oxfordshire planning committee.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Councillor Rehman requested information from the Cabinet Member on the timescale for the resolution of the issue.	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Councillor Railton agreed with Councillor Rehman's comments, noting that the previous imprecision in the timescales was concerning. It was explained that the matter is out of the Council's hands as the decision will be taken by South Oxfordshire District Council.

<b>AR11: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Recently, and repeatedly, a number of works vehicles have been parked on the grass at Manzil Way Gardens causing damage to the grass. Can the portfolio holder please confirm whether any permission has been given for this?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>These were contractor's vehicles connected to works at the St Hilda's College Annex. No permission was sought or given for them to bring vehicles onto the site. The college has been contacted and concerns raised, and they have offered to undertake restoration of the grass area disturbed.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>Councillor Powell noted the damage to the area by contractors and requested information from the Cabinet Member on the timescale for restoration.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>Councillor Railton committed to update Councillor Powell via email.</p>

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

<b>NC1: From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Given the uneven and poor quality of pavement repairs in parts of Oxford by Oxford Direct Services, (notably in the Cutteslowe part of Wolvercote Ward), as well as their generally high and unchallenged costs, can the</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>ODS on behalf of the City Council undertakes a range of works of repair and maintenance on minor streets in the city under an arrangement under S42 of the Highways Act. The type of works and the location of the works</p>



<p>city council in future put similar works out to tender to other contractors?</p>	<p>to be undertaken are agreed at the beginning of the year with Oxfordshire County Council, who provide funding for them.</p> <p>In Wolvercote Ward, some slurry surfacing has been undertaken. This is designed to prolong the life of existing surfacing rather than a full resurfacing arrangement and therefore a different finish is achieved.</p> <p>If there are any areas of concern, it would be helpful if they could be reported on Fix My Street so they can be inspected by ODS and addressed as appropriate.</p> <p>The cost of the works to be undertaken by ODS is agreed by the County Council when they confirm the schedule of works. ODS engage the same specialist sub-contractor as the County Council for works of this nature, ensuring significant economies of scale and delivering best value alongside consistent quality standards. Furthermore, all costs are subject to rigorous review by the County Council, providing assurance that ODS and the City Council are securing the most competitive and fair pricing available.</p> <p>If works were to be tendered separately, additional resource would be required within the City Council to undertake the procurement and supervise the work. Given the benchmarking that has taken place it is considered that ODS are delivering value for money for the City Council.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>NC2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Chapman</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>I note the recent submission of updated plans for the Bertie Park development's bridge connecting sites A and B following a pause of over a year in that application's progress. Do you have an estimate of the</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>There is currently no proposed increase in the overall cost of this scheme to the Council over the past year, with any cost implications expected from proposed changes all currently contained with scheme contingencies.</p>

cost increase due to raising the standard of the bridge proposed, or due to above-inflation construction cost increases in the interim? What lessons are taken from this in terms of feedback to government regarding statutory consultees, or how this council and its companies deliver housing sites?	As this is still a live planning application, no lessons learned have been developed at this time with a view to sharing with the Government.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Smowton asked the Cabinet Member to comment on why the objection to the initial designs for Bertie Park bridge was not anticipated, and asked whether the Environment Agency provide guidance on how these objections and delays could be avoided.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Chapman could not comment on the choices of the Environment Agency, however explained that ongoing work is seeking to find an updated and appropriate proposal.

<b>NC3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b> Since the regeneration plans, the area that used to be called Spindelberry Nature Park has been neglected with lots of overgrown areas. When will the Park be tended to?	<b>Written Response</b> There are currently some works connected with the new development to be undertaken in the area. These were delayed whilst the drainage strategy was revised but this development is nearing completion with occupations due to take place next year. The remainder of the Nature Park is being maintained to the normal schedule but if there are specific concerns can they be raised directly with the Parks team so they can be investigated and allayed.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

#### NC4: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Chapman

##### Question

Can the portfolio holder please outline what work is being undertaken to improve response rates on the members enquiry form in light of members experiencing some enquiries receiving no responses and others enduring lengthy delays?

##### Written Response

I agree that response times are not where we would want them to be. Interestingly, this is not linked directly to volume, as high volume areas are often doing well. It is low volume and niche technical areas, which seem to be struggling on response times, and plans are being developed for these teams to improve.

Officers responsible for answering enquiries receive reminders to respond by the correct dates.

Directors also now receive a weekly update email showing outstanding cases for their areas of responsibility. This is also discussed at the Corporate Leadership Team weekly meeting. We are looking at introducing a simple way for Members to be able to follow-up on late enquiries, as well as introducing a clearer drop down set of options to choose from.

I shall be monitoring the data at my portfolio meetings, in addition to updates on performance coming to the Leaders Meeting.

I would add this is the first time we have been able to record, and monitor Members Enquiries where as before, we had no collective knowledge of them. The system also offers less experienced members a way to submit their case work rather than expecting them to know how to do this on a one-to-one basis with officers.

##### Supplementary Question

Councillor Powell thanked the Cabinet Member for the detail provided in the original response and asked if an indication of the number of enquiries flagged as nonresponsive could be given.

##### Verbal Response

Councillor Chapman committed to updating Councillor Powell on this when possible.

**NC5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Chapman****Question**

Can the portfolio holder list all of the different herbicides used by Oxford City Council, ODS or any contractors and give the amounts of each used in each of the past three years; and in which types of locations, each of the different herbicides is used?

**Written Response**

Volumes have not changed significantly for the last few years and therefore you can assume that these volumes are consistent from year to year:

Treatment to Pavements, garage areas, HRA areas, car parks

Trustee Amenity, 3 applications totalling 168 litres in all.

Treatment to garden paths, patios etc for the HRA garden scheme (where residents are happy for us to apply)

Nomix Dual 5 litres per year total

To Sheltered schemes, paths and paved areas

Nomix Dual approx. 20 litres per year total

To ODS depot hardstandings

Nomix Dual 5L per year

Treatment at schools (for private contracts) and around pavilion buildings

Nomix Dual 15L per year

Playground hardstandings

Nomix Dual 15L per year

Treatment of Japanese Knotweed on Countryside sites

Roundup Bioactive 1L

Treatment of fine turf areas (sports pitches)

Football pitches Depitox 500 45L, T2 Green Pro 135L

Bowls greens/ tennis Roundup Pro 5L

<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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<b>NC6: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Can the portfolio holder set out how the council ensures human rights and environmental standards are upheld in the supply chain of textile recycling undertaken by and on behalf of the council?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>We request suppliers to provide details of their downstream supply chains and the end market of the materials when we set up our textile recycling service. They must evidence TRUST (Trader Recycling Universal Standard) Certification and/or ISO 9001.</p> <p>TRUST accreditation standard requires independent auditors to verify recyclers meet high standards in health and safety, business practices, labour, environment, and transport. This gives charities confidence when selling their goods to certified traders.</p> <p>ISO 9001 accreditation incorporates sustainability, ethics and corporate responsibility into business operations.</p> <p>The contractor had to go through audits as part of the accreditations for TRUST and are working towards ISO 9001 (TRUST not renewed for 2025) which looks at the supply chain.</p> <p>The contractor also has commitments with Charity Partners that is contractual and subsequent membership with the Fundraising Regulator.</p> <p>They also have contracts with sorting partners (copies provided as part of the tender process) which states our expectations and are validated during audits. (last audit Nov 2025 on site in the Ukraine)</p> <p>The ODS Procurement and waste team met with the contractor before awarding the contract to discuss the exportation of textiles as we were unable to get information on the international customers from desk</p>

	<p>research and wanted assurance and commitment before establishing the service.</p> <p>References were also sought from other councils working with the Contractor to ask what due diligence they had done on the end destination and customers.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>NC7: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder provide the data for the most recent month on where each category of textiles is going – especially unusable 'rag' textiles?	<b>Written Response</b> We do not collect unusable RAG's. The contractor dealing with textile collections has confirmed the following supply chain for materials they do collect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usable clothing from this contract is sent to our Ukrainian customer. The stock is retained in the country of shipment and resold in a network of second hand and vintage clothing shops</li> <li>• Duvets and Pillows are sent to Pakistan for sorting and reforming into stuffings and industrial textile products.</li> <li>• Those 'End of life' garments that maybe collected are recycled into industrial wipers and cloths, mattress filling, insulation and new fibres.</li> </ul> The Contractor's systems provide records of end market data, recycling and reuse rates and all associated documentation. More information on the company can be found here <a href="#">About us   Recycling Solutions North West</a> they are members of the Textile recycling association

	<b>Collections from Oxford City households and donation banks for Oct 2025</b> -Duvet/pillows- 5,213kg -Textiles from doorstep collection and banks – 27,404kg
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

## Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

<b>AH1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Re: plans to begin charging for Museum entry: do you know the proportion of Oxford vs. Oxfordshire vs. further-afield visitors? Will you consider City or County residents retaining free or discounted entry, and if so what are the relative financial impacts of these options?	<b>Written Response</b> No. Under the previous system no data about visitors was formally collected, so information isn't available. One of the purposes of ticketed entry is to enable us to collect the relevant data. Data will be monitored to assist with financial planning and enable access. This data would allow the financial impacts of future plans to be accurately predicted rather than estimated. City and County residents will be able to access the museum for free for at least 12 days per year under the new system, more so for residents with particular circumstances.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Smowton asked the Cabinet Member whether a scheme could be operated which ensures	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Hollingsworth clarified that this is already being done.

entry is free for those living in the city, and a charge is only applied to those visiting from outside the city for an initial period of time.

## AH2: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Hollingsworth

### Question

Oxford has a competitive market for free museums or galleries. EG: The Ashmolean, Pitt Rivers, MAO and The History of Science Museum. Is there a risk that introducing the MOX entry fee will reduce footfall and fail to make a big enough difference to the budget spend on the museum?

### Written Response

These museums have collections of historic or current materials with a specific national and international attraction, as well paid for exhibitions and events. These materials and events drew in visitors from across the UK and beyond.

The offer in MOX is different. MOX is the only museum in Oxford which tells the story of Oxford not just as a collection of historic buildings but of the people who have made this city what it is. Marketing this across the city, in partnership with other attractions where relevant, will attract those who want to learn more about the city and its people.

Evidence suggests that where people have paid to get in – such as the events in MOX which are already subject to a charge – visitors are both more likely to attend and are also more likely to spend more time engaging with the museum and are therefore more likely to spend money at the museum shop.

### Supplementary Question

None.

### Verbal Response



**AH3: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Hollingsworth****Question**

Could the cabinet member explain why "the free entry [at MOX] may have had a negative impact on visitor's perception of the potential quality of the offer" (point 7. Cabinet Agenda item 9.) When point 6. above names 2 "world renowned" museums; The Ashmolean and Natural History Museum Oxford which are both free and presumably don't have a negative perception due to being free.

**Written Response**

Evidence from MOX and from museums more widely confirms that if entry is free then visitors are less likely to perceive the offer as positive, less likely to make a visit even after accepting an invitation to an event and less likely to spend time in the location and therefore money in the museum shop. This was confirmed by the impact of introducing charging for events at MOX, where attendance rates increased, not decreased.

The offer at both the Ashmolean and the Natural History Museum is significantly larger than that at MOX, which makes them not comparable. The Ashmolean does charge entry for exhibitions, which are some of its most significant attractions. The standard ticket entry for the current exhibition for example is £16.20.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response****AH4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Hollingsworth****Question**

Planning application for the Ozone: when will the application go before the planning committee to be decided and considering the target date for the determination date was 23/09/25, what has caused the delay in it going to committee?

**Written Response**

All live planning applications are subject to a range of issues that impact on the decision-making process, such as requirements for evidence from the applicant, third parties with a statutory consultation right such as the Environment Agency, or where planning officers need to seek clarification on a particular element of that evidence. It is not possible to answer about a specific live planning application.

There is currently no fixed proposed date for the application to reach the Planning Committee.

<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Councillor Djafari-Marbini noted the level of interest from residents in the matter and asked the Cabinet Member whether an indication of timelines could be provided to support the vulnerable groups who use the area.	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Councillor Hollingsworth noted that the Council is the planning authority but cannot make progress until third parties provide clarification. Once this happens, the decision will be taken.
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<b>AH5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b>  The following questions relate to the Ozone area planning which is of much concern to many residents. There are currently two applications: Planning Ref No: 25/01588/FUL but also another for the Bingo Hall (AKA Unit 1) Planning Ref No: 23/01198/FUL (for demolishing the Bingo Hall and replacement with life sciences labs etc). Why are there 2 applications when it would appear more logical to have only one which covers the entire site that will be developed? And why isn't The Bingo Hall application listed under related cases on the planning portal for 25/01588/FUL?	<b>Written Response</b>  It is up to an applicant to decide how and when to submit planning applications, and it is up the Local Planning Authority to meet their legal requirement to decide on the applications it has received.  In this case one application is for the whole site, and one is for part of the site. As they have both been submitted by the applicant the law requires the City Council as the planning authority to consider both applications and arrive at a decision on both.  The planning portal is software outside the control of the Council, but related applications are linked by having an identical address/site definition, which these do not, as one only applies to part of the site.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  Councillor Djafari-Marbini asked the Cabinet Member whether the applications will be taken as a whole, or separately.	<b>Verbal Response</b>  Councillor Hollingsworth appreciated the difficulty with the online presentation of the applications but explained that due to the functions of the software used, the applications are displayed separately. Councillor Hollingsworth also explained that applications can be submitted in parts, or as a whole, and must be treated distinctly where necessary in line with legal requirements.

<b>AH6: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> What has delayed the decision on The Bingo Hall application more than 2 years?	<b>Written Response</b> The applicant has not completed the s106 agreement, and therefore the decision cannot be issued by the City Council
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH7: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the Portfolio holder explain whether Oxford City Council supports the inclusion of a multi-modal transport hub in the new masterplan for Oxford Train Station?	<b>Written Response</b> <p>The West End and Osney SPD was approved by this Council as part of the Development Plan was adopted by the City Council in November 2022. This document provides additional guidance to the existing Local Plan 2036, which has specific policies covering Oxford Station.</p> <p>The West End and Osney SPD makes clear that one of the four core objectives for the Station Gateway site is “To provide a multi-modal hub”. This is based on the language used in paragraph 128 of the SPD which says that a critical outcome is “Establishing Oxford Station as a world-class multi-modal transport hub”.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**AH8: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth****Question**

The council is about to embark on a new pitch strategy, which will outline the current need for sports pitches across the city. The current pitch strategy draws on data from 2018-19 and is therefore likely to be largely out of date. Can the portfolio holder confirm whether the design of a new pitch strategy will conclude prior to the final draft of the local plan? If it will not, can the portfolio holder explain how the new local plan, relevant site allocations and policies, might be developed in a way that makes it possible for the changing demand for sports pitches to be taken into account? Is it possible for the plan to ensure that planning officers and committees are able to take into account new data on demand when reviewing applications?

**Written Response**

The current Play Pitch Strategy covers the period from 2022 to 2036, so it is sufficient for sport and physical activity operations. However, it was considered sensible, given the work being carried out on a new Local Plan, to begin work on a new Playing Pitch Strategy. While the Strategy will not be fully completed by the time the Local Plan is submitted for Inspection, the work on the evidence base required for the new Strategy will be largely complete, and this evidence base will be used to inform the policies in the new Local Plan as they are submitted to the Inspector.

The intention is to publish this emerging evidence base alongside the Draft Local Plan. Officers in both Planning and Leisure are working alongside one another to ensure that both the Draft Local Plan and the emerging Strategy effectively incorporate the emerging evidence.

When reviewing a planning application, decision makers, whether officers or the Planning Committee, have to give weight to the Local Plan that is extant at the time of the decision.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response****AH9: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth****Question**

Does the portfolio holder agree that a multi-storey car-park should not be included in the plans for the new development at Oxford Train Station?

**Written Response**

The new development at Oxford Station, which could include a new track and bridge on the east side of the station to match the new track on the west side, and then the new platform and entirely new station building that would be required as a result, is an exciting and transformational opportunity to deliver the kind of Oxford Station that we can be proud of.

	<p>The vision of this new station “as a world-class multi-modal transport hub” is integral in the West End and Osney Mead SPD, which is part of this Council’s Development Plan along with the Local Plan 2036.</p> <p>All of this requires space, and it requires a very substantial amount of money to pay for it. This will only come from taking the site that is currently the Becket Street car park, and replacing it with developments that deliver the increase in capital values necessary to pay for the new railway bridge, new track, new platforms, and new station building</p> <p>The City Council has long expressed its desire for a no or low customer car parking solution as part of any redeveloped train station. We will continue to push for this as part of the development of the latest masterplan. It is proposed that the Network Rail-led masterplan about to start at the station will inform a planning application. This will need to be supported by a robust Transport Assessment and this, alongside all other planning and transport policies, will help inform the eventual application.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Muddiman thanked the Cabinet Member for the original response and asked whether confirmation could be given that the masterplan for the new station would require Network Rail to seek planning permission.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth confirmed that planning permission would be required.</p>

<b>AH10: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Can the portfolio holder set out how many alcohol licences within the two Special Saturation areas of Cowley Road and the city centre have been refused in</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>In the past three years, there has been one alcohol licence refusal within the Special Saturation areas of Cowley Road and the city centre, where an objection related to the Special Saturation Policy.</p>

the past three years as a result of the Special Saturation Policy?	
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH11: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder set out how many new licensing applications there have been within the previously designated Special Saturation Policy areas since the Special Saturation Policy has not been in place; and how many new licensing applications, within these were there in the same time period the previous year?	<b>Written Response</b> Between April and November 2025, when the Special Saturation Policy was not in place, there were 17 new licensing applications within the previously designated SSP areas. During the same period in 2024, when the policy was in effect, there were 8 applications.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH12: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> In light of the £10 billion proposed investment by Larry Ellison in research, science and development, can the portfolio holder please reaffirm that the central priority of this council will remain firmly focused on housing delivery over and above employment space?	<b>Written Response</b> The significant investment into Oxford by the Ellison Institute of Technology is testimony to the scientific and academic draw of the city. This investment will be focused on the Oxford Science Park, a site which is allocated employment land.  As the Local Plan 2036 makes clear, every employment site in Oxford – including sites such as the major hospitals, academic institutes, BMW and

	<p>the various science and business parks – can be used for housing development, as long as relevant national and local planning policies are met. No new employment sites were allocated in the Local Plan 2036.</p> <p>The City Council continues to leave no stone unturned to find sites suitable for housing, and as part of the Local Plan 2036 and the emerging new Local Plan has already reached out to neighbouring Councils regarding accommodating housing need that cannot be met in the city because sufficient sites are not available.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

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

<b>CM1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> Many basketball courts in Council run parks in Oxford still have damaged or missing nets on the basketball hoops. Can the Cabinet Member make sure that all sports nets in the Parks are checked on a regular basis and repaired or replaced when needed?	<b>Written Response</b> The ODS Parks teams undertake regular checks of parks facilities. New replacement basketball nets are on order and will be replaced shortly.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Fouweather asked the Cabinet Member why, since the last time this question was raised, nothing had been done.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Munkonge confirmed that the replacement process is ongoing.

<b>CM2: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Wolvercote Cricket Club has been waiting far too long for this council to sign off the lease on the cricket nets in Cutteslowe Park. Will the cabinet member please give me a binding guarantee of a date by which this will be done?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>The Council is sorry for any inconvenience caused whilst the lease is going through the necessary process. A new officer is in post and will pick up and make contact with the club to help progress this. The Council is only in control of 50% of the transaction and the timescale is dependent on the responses from both parties. However, in the meantime this does not impact the clubs' ability to use the site.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>Councillor Gant thanked the Cabinet Member for the original response and queried whether the impact on the public's ability to use the site for insurance purposes is recognised.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>Councillor Munkonge acknowledged the impact noted by Councillor Gant and explained that as cross-party work is ongoing, but the dates cannot be guaranteed.</p>

<b>CM3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Where will the Sandy Lane replacement like for like pitches be located, and what is the timeline for their availability?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Officers from OCC are currently working with officers from OxPlace to explore options for the relocation of pitches from Sandy Lane. At this stage we are not in a position to confirm exactly where the relocation sites will be. We will be working in collaboration with local members as well as the users of Sandy Lane to fully explore options for the relocation of the pitches and can provide a further update once sites have been confirmed.</p> <p>The replacement sports pitches will be planned to be in place before any such operations at Sandy Lane cease. As such we do not anticipate there being any temporary loss of pitches.</p>



<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>Councillor Djafari-Marbini emphasised that it is hard for local residents to make plans without further information and therefore asked the Cabinet Member whether they could provide an update.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>Councillor Munkonge confirmed the Council will continue to pursue engagement with local residents.</p>
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<b>CM4: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>I am aware you have been engaging local businesses concerning the congestion charge which has been helpful and some hope that one council at least takes the time to listen.</p> <p>Given local businesses have already stated loss of business due to congestion charges, what additional processes or plans have we in place to monitor trade and the ramifications of the congestion charge.</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>We are always happy to engage with businesses and would encourage them to raise concerns with the relevant agencies.</p> <p>There has not yet been sufficient time to draw any conclusions on the implications of the congestion charge on businesses, but we will work with them to ensure that where they have issues of concern we are helping direct them to the right place.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p>Councillor Rehman thanked the Cabinet Member for the response and asked whether he could reach out to local businesses to make them feel more secure.</p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p>Councillor Munkonge confirmed that outreach is already ongoing in relation to wider issues.</p>

LS1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr L Smith

Question

- 1. Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council how many complaints have been received this year from tenants of Housing Associations in the city?
- 2. Is this an increase over previous years?
- 3. Is any one Housing Association generating more complaints than expected?

Written Response

There were 12 complaints in 2024/25 and 10 so far in 2025/26 (to 17 November). GreenSquareAccord has the highest number this year with four. A detailed breakdown is provided below.

	24/25	25/26 to 17 Nov
A2 Dominion	2	1
GreenSquareAccord	3	4
Home Group	1	1
Legal and General Affordable Homes	1	1
Orbit	0	1
Peabody	4	2
Stonewater	1	0

Supplementary Question

None.

Verbal Response

LS2: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr L Smith

Question

Written Response

<p>Section 42 Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, often known as Awaab's Law, came into effect in England from 27 October 2025.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member outline what steps the Council has taken to ensure that all Council housing properties are compliant with the provisions of this legislation?</p>	<p>A new Damp and Mould Policy was approved by Cabinet in October which sets out the Council's full approach to ensuring compliance with Awaab's Law. Procedures are in place between ODS and OCC with additional capacity built into both organisations to support the delivery of the legislation, with dedicated damp and mould teams in both organisations.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<b>LS3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr L Smith</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>When will Knights Road re open for access to residents?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The road is due to reopen before Christmas.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<b>LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr L Smith</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Regarding the residents in Windale House and Northbrook House - the letter to residents implied that legal action would be taken against elderly residents if they refused to leave their homes and the options offered to them. Could the cabinet member clarify whether legal action is a possibility if the residents</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The Council has been actively working with tenants in Windale House and Northbrook House since the start of the year when we shared our plans for the future of both blocks, supporting them to move to alternative suitable accommodation. We have so far successfully rehoused 32 tenants and are working with the remaining 20 tenants to find them accommodation, 13 of</p>

turned down accommodation being offered to them by next spring?	<p>which have offers of alternative accommodation and are waiting for a moving date.</p> <p>We continue to aim to rehouse all tenants into an alternative home of their choice, and are providing support with finding alternative accommodation, support with the moving process, and providing financial compensation.</p> <p>As with any programme of moving tenants ahead of future reuse and demolition of a building we have the ability to serve relevant legal orders, and as a last resort apply to court to ensure the building becomes vacant. We will only take this final step if all attempts to engage and support the final tenants are not successful, enabling us to ensure the wider plans to first reuse and then redevelop the sites can proceed without significant delay, helping us meet the housing needs of Oxford citizens.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**To:** Council

**Date:** 24 November 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 put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are 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 to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

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

### 1. Robin Tucker

Oxon4Buses has launched a petition calling on Network Rail to provide a proper bus hub at Oxford Rail Station, in line with [Oxford City Council's vision for the new Oxford train station area and Oxford Station Masterplan](#).

The petition is in response to the absence of any mention of provision for buses (eg bus stops/ bus station/ interchange) from Network Rail's recent tender for development of the train station site. Network Rail's tender requires 'station entrances, public realm, multi-storey car park, cycle hub, offices, life sciences, hotel and residential elements' – but it omits provision for buses.

The omission of access and parking for buses conflicts with [Oxford City Council's Oxford Station Master Plan](#) documents. These refer in various forms to a comprehensive transport interchange including proper bus parking eg a 'new interchange for walking, cycling and bus'.

The Network Rail contract was allocated in October. The petition aims to give voice to public concern about proper provision for buses and a joined-up public transport system in Oxford. **The lack of any plans for buses requires urgent attention – this**

**petition calls on Network Rail, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and relevant stakeholders to act now to reverse this omission.**

### **Why do we need provision for buses at the new train station?**

Better public transport, and seamless connection between different forms of transport, will be key to reducing congestion in and around Oxford. As the petition says, the redesign of the Oxford train station is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform Oxford's transport system, and buses are an integral part of this.

The [planned increase in train services](#) amplifies the need for a station design that includes a proper bus hub to accommodate those travelling to and from the station.

A combined bus/rail interchange would bring more people to the station area, increasing the value and development opportunities of everything around that site, whether part of Network Rail's development or others nearby, and increasing the potential number of rail passengers – a win-win.

### **Why is this urgent?**

Network Rail allocated the contract for the design of the train station site in October 2025. A design that omits provision for buses would conflict with the Oxford Local Plan and Oxford Station Masterplan, so decision-makers need to rectify this omission now, before the design work gets underway.

### **Why have Network Rail omitted a bus hub from the tender?**

We don't know. Previous plans have included provision for bus access and comprehensive bus parking, including most recently the [West End and Osney Mead supplementary planning documents](#).

Oxon4Buses has contacted Network Rail, Oxford City Council, Oxford Bus Company and other stakeholders. A first reply on behalf of Network Rail states "buses are always going to be an important part of the future of Oxford station" but does not explain why buses have been omitted from the tender document.

### **How to help pedestrians?**

Relatively few bus services come to the present station, partly because of limited space. This means most people have to trundle their cases and buggies along narrow, uneven pavements (such as Hythe Bridge Street) to find the bus they need, whatever the weather and despite limited mobility in some cases. This is not the welcome we would like to give our visitors and fellow travellers.

### **Do we need a multi-storey car park?**

Oxfordshire County Council are committed to reducing congestion from cars in the centre of Oxford, and have introduced a congestion charge which will be followed by traffic filters when Botley Road bridge is open. If these policies are successful, as we hope they will be, then there should be many less cars parking at the station.

### **Is a multi-storey car park a good economic choice?**

It seems odd that Network Rail should prioritise a multi-storey car park over buses, when most parked cars have resulted in just one person coming to the station, once a day, whereas buses are continually delivering many passengers, throughout the day.

### **What about Gloucester Green?**

The airport buses and other long-distance services use Gloucester Green on George Street as their terminus. This is an awkward and unattractive site, so we want consideration to be given to moving these services into the bus hub at the Oxford rail station. Let's have joined up thinking about joined up travel.

## **Why now?**

Oxfordshire County Council are designing improvements to movement around the centre of Oxford and to creating a better sense of place for our historic city. The bus and cycle networks are already under consideration. These would be facilitated by new bus routes going to the station and freeing up space.

## **Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture**

We welcome the recent momentum being generated at Oxford station by Network Rail property (now known as Platform4 after their merger with London & Continental Railways) and the opportunity that this will present to giving the city a station it deserves. Oxford City Council officers are working closely with Network Rail and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that the proposals that will come forward in due course will balance the needs of users arriving via a variety of sustainable methods to depart the city and provide a suitably high-quality sense of arrival for those travelling in, with ease of opportunity for onward travel.

Bus provision is an integral part of this, and it is NOT one that has been overlooked in the recent Network Rail tender. The relevant part of the tender documents – Appendix E, Oxford Station Masterplan Development Brief – mentions buses 13 times and includes the specific aspiration for “A new transport interchange to be provided to enhance the transition from bus to rail”.

As I say in my response to a Question on Notice, all of this requires space, and it requires a very substantial amount of money to pay for it. This will only come from taking the site that is currently the Becket Street car park, and replacing it with developments that deliver the increase in capital values necessary to pay for the new railway bridge, new track, new platforms, and new station building

The City Council has long expressed its desire for a no or low customer car parking solution as part of any redeveloped train station. We will continue to push for this as part of the development of the latest masterplan, and any future application will need to be supported by a robust Transport Assessment.

This is an area that the Council has consistently highlighted this area as a key opportunity, and challenge, of the development through planning documents and development of previous masterplan, and we look forward to the Network Rail masterplan taking shape.

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