

To: Council

Date: 25 July 2016

Title of Report: Part 1 Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. 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.

Question to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Question from Judith Harley - Agenda Item 7 – Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground Car Park Extension

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

Item 7 on tonight's agenda, Integrated Performance Report, contains the following:

"The City Executive Board recommends that Council establish budgetary provision in respect of the new bids show in paragraphs 7 and Appendix 4 of the officers' report"

On page 6 of Appendix 4, Carry Forward and New Bids, from Agenda Item 7, the Integrated Performance Report Q4 2015/16, is the following item:

Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground car park extension

New Scheme Request - £132,000

Reason for Request – it is proposed that the adjacent Marsh Recreation Car Park be extended and refurbished to provide extra car parking space while some of the existing Depot staff parking is designated for fleet vehicle use.

When this item was presented to the CEB on 16th June I asked a series of written questions about this request, including:

- Where, exactly, is it envisaged that the Car Park will be extended? Into Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground? Or on its present footprint in an upwards or downwards direction?

and

- The Marsh Recreation Car Park is supposed to be a public car park, for the general public, not a private car park for Depot staff, which is what it actually seems to be. Last summer, planning application 15/01661/CT3 was submitted by the City Council for “Part change of use of recreation ground for external storage of stacked wheeled bins, creation of porous hardstanding, with ancillary fencing and landscaping to increase storage capacity for the Council Depot, for a temporary period of up to 5 years (Amended site plan) | Oxford City Council Depot Marsh Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX4 2HH”. Thanks to a concerted campaign by local residents objecting to this application because of its proposed encroachment into the Park, this application was eventually withdrawn. In the light of this, my third question is – why is this proposal, which presumably will also try to take part of the recreation ground, being made at all? This is effectively trying to achieve the same effect as withdrawn application 15/01661/CT3 by stealth. Any attempts to encroach onto any part of the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground will be met with strong opposition from local residents

The CEB’s reply to these questions envisaged extending the current car park towards the pavilion, “ to enlarge the public car park for recreation users and Direct Services employees and reduce parking problems in the neighbourhood”.

I thought that the City Council’s policy was to encourage use of public transport rather than use of private cars, as seen in their attitude to housing developments with minimal parking, and travel to leisure facilities such as Blackbird Leys Pool. Why not encourage employees of Direct Services to use public transport, and leave Cowley Marsh Car Park (and on-street parking in the neighbouring streets) available for users of Cowley Marsh Park, without the need to expand the parking facilities? How, exactly, will the Council encourage such behaviour?

Written Response from Councillor Turner

The Council absolutely supports and encourages its staff to use public transport, cycling etc. To this extent, the number of staff cycle racks has doubled in the last 2 years at the Cowley Marsh Depot.

Public transport is used by many staff, but shifts commence from 5.30am and bus services are not plentiful at this time of the day, particularly where route transfers are required for those who do not live within a short distance of the depot.

It has not yet been decided whether to proceed with the proposed extension, the rationale for which would be to alleviate the impact of necessary staff parking upon local residents. Local residents will be kept informed as the matter is considered.