

To: Council
Date: 26 July 2021
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.
2. Responses are included where available.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the councillor answering the original question.
4. This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.
5. Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthier Oxford

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

Question	Written Response
<p>Oxford has become a national COVID hotspot with a rapid rise in cases leading to advice not to leave Oxford.</p> <p>How is the Council working with health authorities to bring this latest spike under control?</p>	<p>Oxford City Council officers have been working hand in hand with the Oxfordshire County Council public health team, CCG and other parts of the Oxfordshire Health system and Government to respond to the sharp spike in COVID cases in the city.</p> <p>The Leader of Oxford City Council has COVID response as a standing item on the weekly Leaders meeting. She also attends the biweekly countywide CEOs meeting as well as a weekly meeting with universities and the police focusing on response to case levels in the city.</p> <p>Council officers sit on the Health Protection Board and Oxfordshire Gold meeting, both systemwide bodies,</p>

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

which together have made decisions on actions taken and are supported by specialist Cells covering vaccine deployment, testing, Hubs response and communications.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Blackings – Preventing evictions

Question	Written Response
<p>With the ban on bailiff enforced evictions ending on May 31 2021, what is the City Council doing to prevent eviction of tenants in Oxford and support tenants faced with eviction?</p>	<p>During the pandemic, OCC did the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SMS messages and reminder letters were sent out to all counciltenants with arrears by the Income Team• Weekly referrals in place for Notice Seeking Possession (NSP) cases to the Welfare Reform Team (WRT)• WRT started identifying council tenants whose arrears rose over 8 weeks and started work with them.• Council Enforcement Team used social media to post information with advice for tenants facing illegal

3. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Blackings – Preventing evictions

	<p>evictions and harassment.</p> <p>In addition, and in preparation for the eviction ban, a Homelessness Prevention Task Force has been established and the following activity is being undertaken :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of our Private Rented Sector (PRS) access schemes, to support rehousing homeless households • Enhanced tenancy sustainment for PRS tenants, including welfare support (Universal Credit payments) and appropriate use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) • Mediation between landlord and tenant • Better coordination between teams to support homelessness prevention, such as between the Tenancy Relations Officer and Housing Needs • Review of the Duty to Refer and Advice Case offer the Council delivers to those at risk of homelessness • Housing advice surgery at County Court and improved links with advice centres • Trialling discounts with PRS landlord for Property licensing (HMO licencing and Selective licencing). • Better intelligence to target prevention in PRS (stakeholders and data) • Alignment with the developing Locality Hub model • Continued very generous grant support to Oxford's advice centres who provide additional independent advice on housing and other issues to local residents
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4. From Councillor Smowton to Councillor Blackings – Empty properties

Question	Written Response
When will Latimer House, the block of maisonettes built alongside Beech House but which have languished empty ever since, be brought into use?	The flats have had a new owner since May 2021 who is keen to get them occupied. Flats 2A, 2B and 2C are due to be occupied in August with Flat 2D already occupied.

5. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Blackings – Housing First

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

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

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

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services

No questions

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism

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

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

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

7. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Turner – Crescent Road kick about area

Question	Written Response
<p>Can I ask: what is the situation with the kick about area on Crescent Road near Crescent Halls? Our previous correspondent suggested it was sold. Is it sold or for sale?</p>	<p>Oxford Brookes have been interested in purchasing the property, but a sale has not yet been completed. If Oxford Brookes decides not to progress, we will need to consider other options.</p>

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

Question

According to a 30th June Report by Simon Jack (BBC Business Editor), the government is introducing a Subsidy Control Bill intended to enable councils and government to provide financial support to businesses without the former restrictions of the European Union rules on state aid.

Has Oxford City Council been consulted about this, and does the Cabinet member think it might have implications for Oxfordshire?

Written Response

The subsidy control bill is set to replace the current EU-wide state aid rules, following Brexit. The current state aid rules aim to prevent any state spending (government subsidy) that potentially distorts trade between and within member states. This rule also extends to local authorities. There are exceptions to the current rules where aid is allowable, for instance regional training, subsidies for SME's and public infrastructure. In addition a 'de minimis' level allows aid worth less than 200,000 euros (£175,000) over three years to be exempt.

The government has said the new bill would allow it to be more agile, targeted and timely in its interventions with businesses.

The UK has historically extended far less government support to private business than its EU counterparts in France and Germany and officials have previously said they do not expect the overall level of state aid to increase significantly. The government said it will judge cases for support on whether they deliver good value for money and help other government policy objectives.

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

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

State aid is periodically a consideration which the Council has had the need to have regard to in a number of areas. In recent times government COVID related business grants administered by the Council have only been paid to business who have confirmed that they have received no other government grants which may lead them to exceed

8. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Turner – Implications of Subsidy Control Bill	
	<p>the 200,000 euro threshold. Additionally proposals to make loans to organisations such as Low Carbon Hub, the Council wholly owned companies and the council joint venture, Oxwed, have all needed to have regard to be provided at a commercial rate of interest in order to not distort the market.</p> <p>It may be that in future there will be more flexibility than the current 'state aid' rules allow but the Bill has a number of stages to go through Parliament before it becomes law and there is the possibility of legal challenge, so it is too soon to draw implications for Oxford and Oxfordshire. In discussing this topic, I should also state I am very concerned about the effectiveness of public spending: there are many instances in recent times where government funds appear to have been distributed on the basis of narrow party political considerations, and this Bill has the potential to make that worse.</p>

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

10. From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – Food delivery by bike

Question

There has been a recent increase in the number of mopeds delivering takeaway food in Oxford.

What steps is the council taking to incentivise food delivery drivers and the license food premises for whom they deliver, to use manual or e-bikes rather than polluting mopeds for food delivery?

Written Response

There are presently no City Council incentives for the conversion of petrol to electric mopeds. Details of the Council's approach to electric vehicles that will help us reach our net zero emissions target by 2040, can be found in the Electric Vehicle Strategy set for discussion at the 21 July Cabinet. However, I have written directly to online food delivery companies operating in Oxford to request an update on their strategies for reducing transportation emissions generally and specifically in the city. There are an encouraging number of deliveries made by pedal and cargo bike and we welcome this.

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

Question

Can the electric taxi charging points on Manzil Way be used by others?

Written Response

The T-GULO project is providing rapid chargers to enable the EV transition of the Oxford Hackney and Private Hire trade to play their part in developing the Zero Emission Zone. The intent is to reduce carbon emissions which contribute to climate change and improving air quality for residents.

Rapid chargers are able to fully charge an electric vehicle in well under an hour, and are critical for high mileage users like e-taxi drivers.

T-GULO Phase 1 saw four rapid charging sockets installed in Manzil Way Gardens in 2019. As announced on 25 June, Oxford City Council will be installing new six rapid electric vehicle chargers and 12 charging bays across the city, aiming to support Private Hire, Hackney Carriage electric taxi drivers, and local residents

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

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

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

The EV strategy will examine ways to build inclusivity and fairness around access to charging. This will be needed if there is to be equity in the take up of electric vehicles, whose upfront costs, but not lifetime costs, are currently more expensive than fossil-fuel powered vehicles. Currently, EV Charge Point Operators (CPOs) seek to place chargers only in areas of high demand. Without some level of intervention, this would risk leaving significant areas of the city significantly underserved.

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

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

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Question

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

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

Will the Cabinet member inform Council what the issues are, how and when they will be resolved, and how the proposed Zone will be enforced?

Written Response

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

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

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

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

In the 31 months between July 2018 to January 2021, opposition members have submitted 29 questions about the Zero Emission Zone at 8 meetings of Full Council (although, actually, this number rises by 15 as some questions were in fact multiple questions) and asked 11 supplementary verbal questions on the same. In total I have been asked 55 questions about the ZEZ over this timeframe by the opposition. Of the 29 questions, 2 have broadly covered enforcement. It is not accurate to say that opposition members have asked on a number of occasions about enforcement. Moreover, as the record shows, I have responded fully and accurately to all questions—it is, therefore, not accurate to say that opposition members have not received responses.

14. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood consultations

Question

Do you support the LTN without the outcome of consultation: Councillor's job is to listen and act, can I ask have you spoken to the local business on Cowley road or St Clements and what was their views?

Written Response

No and Yes, as portfolio holder and a resident of and local Councillor for St Clement's. These businesses are the ones I use most often as they are a stone's throw from my home. My consultations are, as such, informal.

I will preface my comments by saying that I was concerned to hear some local businesses say that they feel uncomfortable taking part in the debate about LTNs. The businesses which raised this concern said that they feel under significant, almost irresistible, pressure to take a public position in opposition to the LTNs even when that was not their overall view. In a local democracy, this is disturbing news.

The view of businesses are mixed.

Certainly business owners welcomed the face-face opportunity to discuss the schemes, even if they didn't always have the time to engage in discussion (they are, after all, trying to make a living and can't always stop to talk). Those local businesses that could stop to engage in longer discussion were interested to hear in greater detail the scale of the traffic and congestion problems we face as a city, the likely worsening of those problems, and the intent behind the schemes. They welcomed reassurance about the consultation of emergency services in the development of LTN schemes, having believed that this did not take place. They recognised the need for action and, very fairly, said that they wanted to have a say over what that action looks like.

The business owners with reservations were mostly concerned about a sense of their own individual mobility being restricted, rather than this being a blocker for business. They reflected that the connectivity of bus routes on the roads, particularly Cowley Road, meant that patrons tended to access their establishments by bus, cycling, or walking. Indeed, I was pleasantly surprised to hear (because I care about the growth of community wealth building and creating a 15-minute city) just how much my neighbours in St Clement's are their primary patrons. These residents are, as I know from living in the community and being their local councillor, actively seeking Low Traffic Neighbourhoods for their roads.

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

Question

What monitoring is currently being carried out to assess the impact of the Temple Cowley Low Traffic Neighbourhood trial scheme on Lye Valley Ward?

What does this monitoring show to be the scheme’s current impact on vehicle movements and air pollution in Lye Valley Ward, and in particular on Hollow Way?

Written Response

The implementation of LTNs is a scheme being delivered by Oxfordshire County Council.

Labour councillors were elected on a 2021 manifesto which committed to the acceleration of Oxford’s journey to becoming zero carbon. One of the actions we committed to was this: “Support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to reduce rat-running traffic and encourage active travel.” The City Council Cabinet will be asked on 21 July to approve the commissioning of Oxford City Council’s EV Strategy, which says that the Council “seeks a reduction of private car ownership and use wherever possible” and “is committed to bringing about a balanced road network which is open, safe, and accessible to all road users, so that citizens can move around their own city in their preferred modality as easily as possible”, which “will require the redistribution of Oxford’s road space to users of other vehicle types than the private car, which can slow the growth in predicted car use and enable infrastructure to increase the numbers of citizens getting around by cycling, walking, and bus.”

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

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

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

Oxford City Council responded to the proposals for LTNs by creating a monitoring network of 16 extra diffusion tubes, specifically designed to assess the impacts of LTNs. Such is the coverage of our

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

established monitoring network that the extra tubes were added only in locations where we feel the current air quality monitoring of 75 diffusion tubes does not provide adequate coverage. This includes locations that are currently inside these new LTN regions, but also locations that are on the outskirts of an LTN that might be affected.

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

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

This is particularly necessary in the case of air quality because it is influenced by important external factors such as the weather. It is not as simple as saying that transport emissions alone contribution to air pollution. The less data we have to analyse because the trial is too brief, the greater the uncertainty in the results.

16. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – Low Traffic Neighbourhood air quality 2

Question

On Cowley LTN, what measures has the council made to monitor air pollution on main roads like Oxford Road, Holloway Road, Church Cowley Road and other main roads where traffic been diverted?

Written Response

Please refer to the response to Q15.

Traffic may also be rising because we are gradually unlocking from the bus companies from running a third more buses than they need in order to meet their timetables because they spend so much time in road congestion.

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

Question

Are there plans for more Co-Wheels car sharing spaces for East Oxford, and if not would the cabinet member support their introduction?

Written Response

The Council is committed to reducing car use and car journeys, and Car Clubs, particularly when fleets are electric, contribute towards the achievement of that policy goal, particularly for those who may be less able to afford the costs of car ownership.

As per the recent Cabinet paper on Oxford's EV strategy, which is being commissioned this year, the Council is actively exploring the opportunity for further charging bays for electric Car Club vehicles as part of a citywide approach to EV charging provision by Charge Point Operators. Our new Dynamic Purchasing System for EV goods and services has a Lot specific to Car Club charging that could be used for these purposes, once a formal mandate is in place.

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

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

Question

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

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

Written Response

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

Officers at both councils liaise regularly on this issue looking to identify further opportunities. We have some funding available in the Council's capital programme to support additional cycle parking. I am liaising with the administration about cycling in the city including the city

18.From Councillor Miles to Councillor Hayes – City centre bike parking	
	<p>centre to identify opportunities to free up space on the highway for infrastructure like this. Officers have asked the county council for the current numbers of cycle parking in the locations you requested but they have not as yet heard back. Officers will follow up with this information once it is received.</p> <p>I consulted with Cllr Miles' colleague, Cllr Tim Bearder, at Oxfordshire County Council who says that whilst better cycle parking in the city centre is desirable, he would want to look at projected need and locations in the context of future investments in Oxford City, and so could not commit to anything further at this juncture.</p>

19.From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hayes – E-Scooter pilot 1	
<p>Question</p> <p>In relation to the E-scooters trial,</p> <p>Are the riders exempt from wearing helmets?</p> <p>Are riders allowed to ride on the roads or footpath?</p> <p>Is there any enforcement if yes who is enforcing?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The eScooter trial is a County Council project, and they have advised that the rules that apply to hire e-scooter users are very similar to those for cyclists (i.e. riders are strongly encouraged to wear helmets however this is not mandatory). E-scooter riders are also able to use roads and cycle tracks/ shared use path areas (in the area of operation); however, like cyclists they are not allowed to use footpaths.</p>

20.From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hayes – E-Scooter pilot 2	
<p>Question</p> <p>Was an evaluation of the Voi electric scooter pilot scheme done before the area it covered was extended?</p> <p>If not, why was it felt appropriate to extend it?</p> <p>What data is being collected for evaluation, and does this include the number of accidents?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The eScooter trial is a County Council project. Having passed your question to the authority, they advised that an evaluation of the schemes safety performance, user compliance and analysis of demand for the service was undertaken prior to expansion. A full evaluation of the trial will be undertaken by the County Council and at a national level by the Department for Transport at the end of the trial period.</p>

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

23. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – Combined emissions and congestion charge

23. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hayes – Combined emissions and congestion charge

Question	Written Response
<p>Will the City Council give full consideration in partnership with the County Council to a combined Emission and Congestion charge for the City within the ring road?</p> <p>One that could be carefully calibrated to encourage drivers with low and no emissions vehicles and also to sufficiently free up the Oxford roads of cars, vans and lorries so that there is space for cycle lanes and buses based upon up to date costings for the infrastructure, traffic modelling and financial modelling?</p>	<p>We have always recognised the need to both reduce congestion in the city <i>and</i> to improve air quality. Indeed, this City Council is the first local authority to set an air quality target which is tougher and tighter than the national legal target.</p> <p>That is why for several years we have been working jointly with Oxfordshire County Council to bring forward Connecting Oxford – a scheme designed to reduce traffic levels, increase bus use and improve active travel infrastructure - and develop Britain’s first Zero Emission Zone which will charge polluting traffic for access, so incentivising a shift to zero emission transport, and active travel.</p> <p>The linked Connecting Oxford programme, which has also been through more than one round of public consultation, is designed precisely to sufficiently free up Oxford’s roads of cars, vans and lorries so that there is space for cycle lanes and buses.</p> <p>Both schemes will clearly be based upon up to date costings for the infrastructure, traffic modelling and financial modelling.</p>

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

Question	Written Response
<p>No one denies the threat of climate change. Do you agree with me the County Council needs to invest in the infrastructure ie the better public transport, safer segregated cycle lanes and better school allocation for children to stop parents driving to the school and have LTN 5-10 year strategy for the city?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

25. From Councillor Smowton to Councillor Aziz – Covid Support

Question

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

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

Written Response

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

Test and Trace Applications received

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The DHSC give us 2 months funding at a time, and we have to report to them on our spend regularly before they give us each tranche of funding. It is therefore

unnecessary to require a separate audit of our processes, as they are monitoring our performance and we do contact them regularly with any issues.

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

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

Question

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

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

Written Response

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

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

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

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

Nevertheless, while we will not have officially signed up for the Afghan resettlement scheme, our commitment to continue to be a City of Sanctuary for all asylum seekers and refugees remains.

Cabinet Member for Parks and Waste Reduction

27. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Arshad – Verges

Question	Written Response
<p>Can the cabinet member outline the City Council's policy on the use of pesticide and herbicide sprays on verges within the City?</p>	<p>There is no specific policy in place for the use of herbicides and pesticides. We do not use pesticides in any form but our contractor does use a herbicide for the treatment of weeds on the highway and other specified hard surfaces such as parking areas, garage areas and HRA sites. Our contractor also has the ability to treat Japanese knotweed where needed. Please note that we do not treat grass verges. The treatment is typically applied to the back edges of pavements and along the kerbside. Weed treatment is scheduled to take place three times per year by fully trained and qualified staff.</p>

28. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Arshad - Grass verges

Question	Written Response
<p>Grass verges are now being cut less frequently, which is important for increasing biodiversity, but the Council is not planning to introduce wildflower seeds.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet member consider the best practice guide produced by Plantlife which recommends an initial seeding, using seeds appropriate to the area, to enable wildflower species to take hold?</p>	<p>Wherever possible, the indigenous flora that would grow in any particular location, depending on the geology, soil type and hydrological conditions should be allowed to develop naturally to encourage the greatest range of species.</p> <p>This is particularly important in Oxford where the geology varies greatly, as does the soil and hydrological conditions.</p> <p>Sowing of generic species (over planting) works against this natural process and can actually reduce biodiversity. Some verges which remain species poor may need intervention, but this will need on-going careful assessment. Some of the verges left uncut this year have already produced naturally occurring wild flowers, including orchids.</p>

29. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Arshad – Temple Cowley community hall

29. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Arshad – Temple Cowley community hall

Question

After the closure of Temple Cowley swimming pool there is no community facility in Temple Cowley. We need a community hall in Temple Cowley. Would you support the community facility to be built at Marsh park?

Written Response

There are a number of community accessible facilities within the wider catchment area. These include the soon to be improved East Oxford Community Centre, Asian Cultural Centre, Regal Community Centre, Oxford Spires Academy, St Gregory The Great School, Florence Park Community Centre, Cowley Workers Sports and Social Club, The Venue at Cowley.

There is currently no Council budget to develop or operate a facility of this type at Cowley Marsh park. If there were community groups or organisations interested in developing a community facility within Cowley Marsh Park, they would need to ensure that they could demonstrate a clear need for the facility and that it was deliverable through a business case.

A fair and equitable competitive process would also need to be undertaken to ensure that all interested groups/organisations were able to apply and necessary diligence undertaken such as planning and feasibility.

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

Question

A report from Greenpeace published in April showed that over half of household plastic packaging that the public is told is recycled is actually sent overseas, where it is too often dumped or burned. Can the portfolio holder reassure us that this is not the case with household plastic packaging collected in Oxford and can they provide further details on the end destination for the city's plastic recycling?

Written Response

We've recently requested data on our recycling end destinations for recycling from Viridor, who operate our materials recycling facility. While some of our recycling is sent overseas, most plastics are actually recycled here in the UK, much of it by Viridor themselves, who also own and operate plastic reprocessing plants. The percentages of recyclable materials recycled inside and outside the UK are as follows:

Plastics

Exported: 17.91% (243.11 tonnes)

Recycled in the UK: 82.09% (1114.09 tonnes)

Paper

Exported: 89.27% (1865.21 tonnes)

Recycled in the UK: 10.73% (224.09 tonnes)

Card/cardboard

Exported: 97.80% (2179.22 tonnes)

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

	<p>Recycled in the UK: 2.20% (49.09 tonnes)</p> <p>Metals</p> <p>Exported: 10.12% (57.21 tonnes)</p> <p>Recycled in the UK: 89.88% (507.85 tonnes)</p> <p>Glass</p> <p>Exported: 0.00%</p> <p>Recycled in the UK: 100.00% (1986.89 tonnes)</p> <p>We continue to work with plant operators to encourage them to recycle locally where possible.</p>
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31. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Arshad – Bee Meadows

Question	Written Response
<p>As a means of supporting biodiversity in general, and the bee populations in particular, does the City Council have plans to create bee meadows in parts of the city’s parks and open space and along highway verges that the city is responsible for maintaining?</p>	<p>The City Council in Partnership with ODS is implementing the City Council’s biodiversity action plan. Within this plan steps such as long grass verges, meadows have/are been implement. This work serves to increase habitat for birds and insects including bees.</p>

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

Question	Written Response
<p>In the light of several recent incursions by caravans and other vehicles in the recreation ground north of Five Mile Drive -- which have caused considerable inconvenience to residents, and have cost City Council officer time, and no doubt considerable money, to deal with — can the cabinet member inform Council how it is proposed to physically prevent further such incursions?'</p>	<p>There is no easy or cheap solution to this problem as any entrance security designed to protect against mass vehicle trespass would also keep out emergency vehicles; it is particularly vital there is no hindrance to ambulances accessing these busy sports pitches.</p> <p>Previous experience suggests that mass vehicle trespass also relies on cutting gear that can breach most locks and gates - one group recently broke into Wolvercote bathing area car park despite there being a height barrier and safety lock.</p>

33. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Arshad – ‘No Mow’ May

Question

Can the cabinet member confirm whether the City Council participated in ‘No Mow May’, whether it proposes to next year, and what impact any participation had or is expected to have?’

Written Response

The City Council didn’t participate in No Mow May, we implemented our own long grass policy this year. If there was appetite to participate next year, the public would need to be consulted first.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery

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

Question

What data does the Council currently have regarding evictions from Oxford’s Private Rented Sector, the reasons for them, and consequences for homelessness?

Written Response

The Council’s data on the causes of statutory homelessness shows the ending of private rented tenancies being the most significant cause in the city, although the eviction ban throughout the pandemic did decrease occurrences. In 19/20, 42% of households we owed a Homelessness Prevention Duty towards lost their last settled home due to their private rented tenancy ending, making it the most common reason. Comparing to regional and national averages, our district neighbours, and comparable urban authorities, the ending of private rented tenancies comparably has one of the greatest impacts in Oxford. Further information on PRS evictions in Oxford can be found in the recently published Homelessness Review.

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

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

In addition, the Tenancy Relations Officer in Regulatory Services and Community Safety investigates illegal eviction and harassment and provides advice and support to private rented tenants. Data is held on enquiry type and homelessness preventions. We do

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

not record the reason for illegal eviction although officer knowledge informs us the common reasons include: landlord unaware of correct legal process, failure to pay rent, landlord wants to move into property, landlord wants to do repairs, notice to quit ended and landlord not sought a court order, tenant sub-let.

2020/21 data:

- Threatened illegal eviction: 193 cases leading to 169 successful homelessness preventions (i.e. we prevented the eviction happening) (the remaining cases may not have wanted our intervention)

- Unlawful illegal eviction (enquiry made after the eviction occurred): 7 cases, leading to 2 successful homelessness preventions (i.e. we got their home back) (the remaining cases may not have wanted our intervention)

- Harassment: 12 cases leading to 3 successful homelessness preventions (the remaining cases may not have wanted our intervention)

- 233 miscellaneous tenancy advice requests (e.g. early release from tenancy, general landlord & tenant rights, deposits, undertaking repairs without consent, failure of landlord to give notice of entry, landlords requesting advice on correct legal process to end tenancy) – we do not carry out full homeless prevention on these cases.

Overall 445 enquiries were made in 2021/21.

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

Question

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

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

Written Response

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

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

37. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley biodiversity net gain

37. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley biodiversity net gain

Question

How will biodiversity net gain be delivered on the Horse Field site (Iffley Village) which is already so ecologically rich?

Written Response

The issue of biodiversity net gain will be a matter for any planning application for the site to address, including a survey of the current biodiversity of the site, which has not yet been completed.

38. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley ecological survey

Question

Has the Council undertaken a recent ecological survey of the sensitive Horse Field site in Iffley Village and neighbouring area (home to at least one protected species) before using heavy machinery on-site?

Written Response

This site is not owned by the Council, and the Council has not carried out any work on the site. The owner of the site, and the body that undertook work on the site, is Oxford City Housing Limited, which is a separate legal entity. I am therefore answering the question *about* the company, not *on behalf* of the company; only the company's directors can legally answer for the company.

An initial species survey was conducted prior to the site's acquisition by OCHL, a supplementary badger survey was completed in early 2021 and a baseline ecological survey was completed in June 2021 with additional species-specific ecological surveys to be carried out over the coming weeks. These are being commissioned by OCHL, as the owner of the site.

39. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Horse Field Iffley site damage

Question

Why has heavy machinery been used on the Horse Field site in Iffley Village in both January and June 2021 by Oxford City Housing, resulting in damage to the meadows and their wildlife, despite no planning permission having been granted for the site?

Written Response

The owner of the site, and the body that undertook work on the site, is Oxford City Housing Limited, which is a separate legal entity. I am therefore answering the question *about* the company, not *on behalf* of the company; only the company's directors can legally answer for the company.

The works conducted in both January and June 2021 used industry standard techniques, machinery and equipment that was appropriate to ensure the efficacy of the works required. Planning consent was not required for the works.

40. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Hollingsworth – Lantham Way Passivhaus standard

Question

The City Council has purchased land at Lantham Way, Littlemore, for the building of housing which, according to the consultation introduction will only build to the thermal performance standards in our Local Plan and not to Passivhaus standards, as the Council has the power to do.

Why has the City decided not to set an example and build houses that will need retrofitting within a couple of decades?

Will they be built using a ‘fabric first’ approach?

Written Response

The specification for the Lantham Way development is for it to achieve a 70% reduction of carbon emissions compared to current building regulations, which is a substantially higher standard than the Local Plan requirement of a 40% reduction below building regulations.

Oxford City Council is committed to a fabric first approach for all of their developments. The Council is undertaking feasibility work for the delivery of other energy models such as Passivhaus in future housing developments, but this requires further testing and feasibility work for different types of development form, and is not proposed for Lantham Way.

41. From Councillor Jarvis to Councillor Hollingsworth – Lantham Way social rent percentage

Question

What proportion of “affordable” to social rent is proposed at Lantham Way, and why was the possibility of building 100% for social rent rejected?

Written Response

All 15 of the homes proposed for building at Lantham Way are affordable housing. The current proposal is that eight of the homes (53%) will be social rented properties, above the Local Plan requirement for 40%. The remaining 7 properties (47%) will be either shared ownership or other affordable tenures, above the Local Plan requirement for 10%.

This is not a City Council owned site, and the acquisition of the site from Oxfordshire County Council was at a price that represented best value to the seller, when compared to a sale to a developer on the open market. The cost of the site, and the cost of developing it, mean that a 100% social housing development was not possible here. Had the City Council not acquired the site, and a private developer bought it instead, it is likely that any proposed development would have had considerably fewer social and affordable housing units on it.

42. From Councillor Pegg to Councillor Hollingsworth – Cycle storage guidance

Question

Many residents in Oxford lack space to store their bikes inside their homes and so wish to build storage facilities in their front gardens. Currently there is no planning guidance for doing this in the Oxford Local Plan 2036, so would the portfolio holder support adding guidance on cycle storage in front gardens in the updated local plan which the Council is currently consulting on?

Written Response

As we encourage more journeys to be taken by ‘active travel’ modes like walking and cycling, it is vital that there are sufficient secure parking spaces in both private and public places for cycles, in particular for more expensive electric and/or cargo bikes. Planning guidance, such as a Technical Advice Note (TAN) or other formal document would assist householders in find the right designs, and give them advice on – for example – the necessary steps to balance the demands of the City’s many conservation areas with new structures at the front of their homes. A new TAN on Car and Bicycle Parking is currently being produced by officers which will address this issue; the document will be published on the Council’s website shortly.

43. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hollingsworth – Local Plan site allocations

Question

Does the Cabinet member agree during the review of 2040 local plan Oxford city needs to expand rather than invading any green spaces left in Oxford? Because these open green spaces makes Oxford what it is.

Written Response

The 2040 Local Plan, like all Local Plans, needs to follow an objective process for assessing needs and then allocating sites to meet (or go as far as possible to meet) those needs. The needs that a Local Plan will take into account are those for homes, for jobs, for community facilities and for access to green and open space. For the round of Local Plans across Oxfordshire that includes the current 2036 Local Plan, the same objective tests were used to assess potential development sites in the Green Belt and on green sites in Oxford and outside, and it’s important when our neighbouring Councils are having to allocate sites in their areas to meet the housing needs of Oxford that we continue to use the same objective assessment processes as our partners. To do otherwise would be to undermine the credibility of our Local Plan, and leave it open to objections from surrounding local planning authorities.

No green space is allocated for housing lightly, and any such allocation has to balance up the benefits of the current use against the benefits of the proposed use,

43. From Councillor Malik to Councillor Hollingsworth – Local Plan site allocations

with great weight given to the preservation of green space. That is why in the current Local Plan the vast majority of green spaces, of all types, across the city are strongly protected. It is too early to comment on the likely results of the assessments of need and the assessments of potential allocation of sites to meet those needs in the 2040 Local Plan, but as with the Local Plan 2036 these needs will be balanced against the need for protection of green spaces, based on a full understanding of their multi-functional benefits.

44. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Hollingsworth – Tree Preservation

Question

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

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

Written Response

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

Question

How many paintings are there on the walls of the town hall overall, of these what is the number of portraits and specifically how many are of women, and how many of men?

With this in mind, what steps has the council taken to improve the gender and ethnic diversity of the paintings within the Town Hall so that they better represent the gender and ethnic diversity of our city?

Written Response

There are 115 paintings/artwork on display within the Town Hall, out of these 45 are portraits showing people and the breakdown is as follows:

Male – 37

Female – 3

Male & Female – 2

We have raised this issue previously, but there are complications because the Town Hall is a listed building and so Town Hall staff have sought advice from conservation colleagues. Previous advice was that we can add paintings where there is space but they would have to match the rest of the room - for example the frame would need to be the same as the rest. No further action was then taken as there was no budget allocated to acquire new art.

I raised this issue again a couple of months ago and in June 2021 council officers started liaising with colleagues in our conservation team about being able to replace paintings and they are taking further advice with partners. Once we have further conservation advice we can look into options and costs. I have particularly asked if we could consider loans of art to and from other Oxford

46.From Councillor Miles to Councillor Brown – Town Hall art	
	institutions. There are at least two works of art of a former and current female councillor which it would be fantastic to display.

47.From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Brown – Air conditioned emergency shelters	
Question	Written Response –
<p>As part of the City Council’s emergency planning, what provision does the City have to provide freely accessible air conditioned space for council tenants, and homeless and vulnerable people in the event of an extreme heat wave or heat dome developing over Oxford, as has happened in Seattle and Portland recently?</p> <p>Secondly, has the City Council liaised with the County Council over their provision of emergency shelters for the local population?</p>	<p>In the event of extreme or adverse weather affecting the area the City Council and ODS work with other local agencies involved in Emergency Planning including the County Council, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue, Thames Valley Police and the NHS. This would be guided by the frameworks set by Thames Valley Resilience Partnership and Oxfordshire Adverse Weather Plans. This week the partnership will discuss the impact of the heatwave particularly on highways and railway lines.</p> <p>The City Council, in partnership with the County Council, has developed short-term provision for shelters in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. This is primarily for residents displaced by flooding or terrorist activity. Their use as emergency shelters for other purposes would be decided by the County Council and the cost and resource requirements would be significant.</p> <p>OCC Housing provide advice to tenants on what to do in hot weather, prioritising support to tenants in Housing for Older People schemes. If the incident was serious enough we would enact Business Continuity Plans and Housing which would include measures similar to those that were in place during the Covid lockdown with a single point of contact and welfare checks on vulnerable residents and actions necessary to protect them.</p> <p>In terms of homeless residents, our providers are taking the necessary measures to safeguard people in their accommodation. For rough sleepers OCC Homelessness Service is working with St Mungo’s Outreach service to provide water and sunscreen and welfare checks as well as information on day services available to people sleeping rough.</p> <p>Converting existing public buildings into hot weather relief centres would displace existing services and as stated previously be at significant cost.</p>

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