

To: Council
Date: 21 March 2022
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
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 Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless

1. DB1 From Cllr Wolff to Cllr Walcott – Evenlode Tower cladding

Question

Cladding on Evenlode Tower has come loose or fallen off at least twice in the past 6 months - in October, and in February during Storm Eunice. Is the portfolio holder confident that the current cladding on Council owned buildings is safe, and what steps are being taken to

Written Response

Fortem have carried out initial safety works to Evenlode to mitigate the risk of further problems in the short term whilst they investigate what further works are necessary to give longer term assurance and resilience. The Council has appointed its own structural engineer to

1. DB1 From Cllr Wolff to Cllr Walcott – Evenlode Tower cladding

prevent further damage to cladding as extreme weather events become more common?

provide independent advice also. We are working with Fortem to confirm what further works are necessary and a timetable for delivery.

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism**2. MC1 From Cllr Wolff to Cllr Clarkson – Unlocking Community Moorings****Question**

A new report from Collaborative Housing - Unlocking Community Moorings in Oxford - has been part-funded by Oxford City Council. The report includes a series of significant recommendations around governance, funding and potential new mooring sites. What is the process for the City Council to respond to the report's findings?

Written Response

The report was not directly commissioned by the council and as such there is no requirement for a formal process to respond to its findings. However, the report's recommendations will be considered by a wide range of council services in relation to their involvement with the waterways.

3. MC2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson – Taxi licences issued by gender**Question**

Does the city council licensing authority collect sex-disaggregated data (male/female) on the number of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences issued? Of the current valid taxi licenses issued by the city council – how many Hackney Carriage licenses and Private Hire licences respectively are currently held by females versus males?

Written Response

The General Licensing Team collects sex-disaggregated data as disclosed on the application form by the applicants. The Authority currently licence 16 female Private Hire Drivers and 1 female Taxi Driver. There are currently 605 Private Hire Drivers and 254 Taxi Drivers licensed by the council.

4. MC3 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson – Taxi licences revoked by other authorities**Question**

How many requests have been made to other licensing authorities on the details

Written Response

All applicants (new and renewals) are required to declare any current or

4. MC3 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson – Taxi licences revoked by other authorities

of why a hackney carriage and/or private hire license applicant to Oxford City Council's licensing authority has had their license previously suspended, refused or revoked by another authority?

previously held Private Hire or Taxi licences and the details of the relevant licensing authority. Once the information is disclosed the council makes a request for disclosure for the licensing history with the relevant Authority, which includes suspensions, refusals, and revocations.

Additionally, under the Oxfordshire Joint Operating Framework, all Oxfordshire Authorities share information relating to suspensions, refusals, and revocations on a weekly basis.

5. MC4 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson – Recruitment of female taxi drivers

Question

To complement the council's work on enhanced measures to improve women and girl's safety at night, what concrete steps have been taken to date to recruit female taxi drivers? What other measures have been taken in partnership with taxi license holders and operators to improve women and girls' safety at night?

Written Response

The council does not recruit taxi or private hire drivers.

The council's role is to assess applications from drivers and to determine a 'fit and proper' person status to protect the public.

The council takes a strong position with regard to safeguarding and all drivers and operators must complete the Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training and pass the Safeguarding Test every 3 years. Drivers who do not undertake the training or fail the test have their licences suspended until they have satisfactorily completed both.

The creation of "Safe Zones" is one of the measures being explored as part of the Safer Streets 3 award of £426k to make nights out in the city safer by focusing on the journey from home, into the city and back again. Safe Zones will be where users can organise and wait for a safe journey.

Our officers are regularly out at night and two Licensing Officers are scheduled to complete Bystander Intervention training, which aims to reduce incidents of

5. MC4 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Clarkson – Recruitment of female taxi drivers

violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces at night.

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services**6. MR1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Rowley – cycle to work loan scheme****Question**

What is the uptake rate of the city council's cycle to work loan scheme?

Written Response

We currently have 18 people in the scheme which equates to approx. 2.5% of staff.

7. MR2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Rowley – Pool bikes**Question**

How many pool bikes does the city council have for its staff and councillors to borrow? Of these how many in the pool are manual bikes, how many electric, and how many cargo bikes?

Written Response

There are three bookable bikes for staff only use in relation to their council work. One of these are electric, and two are manual. There are no cargo bikes.

These bikes are currently being serviced and repaired. Due to the age and condition of the bikes, we are also exploring options to upgrade them.

8. MR3 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Rowley – Data breach – ICO response**Question**

Has the Council received a decision from the Information Commissioner's Office about any penalty for the data breach that occurred last year?

Written Response

The Council reported a data breach in July 2021 regarding a small number of rent statement letters sent to incorrect addresses, due to difficulties in implementing a new ICT system. The ICO advised the Council on 30th September 2021 that their decision in respect of the data breach reported was that no further action by the ICO was necessary. However, the ICO recommended that the Council

8. MR3 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Rowley – Data breach – ICO response

investigate the cause of the incident, to ensure that we understood how and why the breach occurred and what steps were needed to prevent re-occurrence. Since that time significant work has been undertaken on the QL system to ensure data is accurate.

9. MR4 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Rowley – AAREON QL system**Question**

Can the Council now be given an end date for the implementation of the AAREON QL system and how much this has overrun the expected original date?

Written Response

The original agreed implementation time table was a go live of May 2019. Following delays a further 2 dates were set for July and October 2020 but both were missed due to the supplier not delivering on development of the system specifically on a number of modules for use in Housing Needs Services. As an agreed variation to the contract, a decision was taken to defer some of the Housing Needs non-critical functionality to a later phase, to allow a go live. A go live was eventually achieved in May 2021. The implementation has encountered issues since go live and we continue to work on bringing the system to a 'steady state' i.e where all processing is being undertaken through the system albeit with work-around processes by 31-3-2022. This mainly effects back office functionality and in the meantime members can be given assurance that the council house repairs jobs are being undertaken, external suppliers are being paid and council house rent recovery is being undertaken.

10. MR5 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Rowley – AAREON QL system budget**Question**

Can the Council be informed how much the original budget costs have overrun for the AAREON QL system, including the additional staff costs incurred by the

Written Response

The estimated total project cost agreed at CEB in 2018 was £1.6M. Given the delays and the need to retain project staff for a longer time period the

10.MR5 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Rowley – AAREON QL system budget

problems encountered?

projected estimated cost to bring the system to 'steady state' is estimated at approximately £2.7 million. Within this figure additional staffing and project management costs to deal with the issues encountered and to manage risks of disruption to services encountered since go-live in May 2021 are estimated to be around £500k. The Council will be engaging with the supplier for some compensation, where they are found to be at fault.

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

11.ET2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner – Pension Fund investment in Russian owned or controlled companies

Question

Does the city council have any pension fund investments in Russian owned or controlled companies? If so, what are the council's plans to divest in these without delay?

Written Response

The Council holds deposits in a number of money market funds which it has confirmed do not have Russian exposure.

In addition, the Council holds investments in 2 multi asset funds that each had minimal holdings in Russian Banks which in February were removed.

With specific reference to the question, we are not managers of a pension fund so we do not hold any pension fund investments. The pension fund is operated by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the Brunel Pension Partnership. In an announcement on 8th March the County Council endorsed the decision by the Brunel Pension Partnership to continue with divestment from all Russian organisations, in addition to not making any further investments in Russian assets.

12.TH1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Hayes – Administration Policy on Connecting Oxford

Question

Following recent social media activity, some councillors from the Labour Party are looking confused about the connecting Oxford & the bus gates in the City.

This Administration still supports the connecting Oxford or have they changed their mind or are the Labour councillors who wrote the social media trying to muddy the water for the fourth coming elections? Can you clarify Administration policy on connecting Oxford?

Written Response

Our city has many strengths, including a consensus on the need to address dirty air, climate breakdown, and debilitating congestion on Oxford’s roads which is undermining local bus services, slowing taxi and minicab journeys, and seriously endangering cyclists and pedestrians. I strongly welcome Cllr Malik’s excellent commitment to tackling these issues.

How we achieve these aims is a matter for democratic debate. Everyone will be included in the year-long conversation about how we move around our city safely, sustainably, and seamlessly. I welcome Cllr Malik’s commitment to engaging in this debate.

The administration has restated plans to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy and traffic filters with slight modifications (i.e., the extension of the WPL across the city) as part of Connecting Oxford. Plans were announced alongside the County Council which is the highways authority.

As part of the democratic debate that I mention, there will be a strong need to understand how the measures will work and interact with each other, so that they achieve the aims set for them. It will be important to listen to elected members, themselves representing residents, to understand local issues. All of this will ensure that we can listen and, should it be necessary, respond with flexibility while ensuring we achieve our aims.

13.TH2 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Hayes – Concerns raised regarding The Plain Roundabout

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Question

On Twitter, Cllr Hayes said when they designed the Plain roundabout the County Council didn't listen his concerns. May I ask, since last year, now Labour is a major coalition partner in the County Council, how many times he has raised his concerns and what has been done about so far?

Written Response

Since May 2021 I have raised the lack of safety at The Plain roundabout with Oxfordshire County Council on at least three occasions. I have raised the lack of safety for cyclists within other parts of the city, including the St Clement's ward I represent. (Using my ward budget, I have financially contributed to measures to improve cycling safety in my ward, alongside the financial contributions of my previous co-councillor.) Oxfordshire County Council are taking forward a series of cycling investments in the city, and I have influenced these as I have also influenced other cycling measures including the intervention on Magdalen Bridge.

14.TH3 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Hayes – County Council response on safety of cyclists at The Plain roundabout

Question

The Leader of the City Council has called upon the County Council to review the safety of cyclists at The Plain roundabout urgently. May I ask what the response is from the county council?

Written Response

The cycling fatality at The Plain is deeply sad. In common with councillors, I want to extend condolences to the loved ones of Dr Felce. Along with the Leader of the City Council, city and county councillors, and concerned citizens, I attended the vigil at The Plain to pay our respects.

In response to the letter by Cllr Brown, the Leader of the County Council has [publicly stated](#) that she would like to see the introduction of a Vision Zero strategy - *to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all* - made a success across Oxfordshire.

She has asked the County's Corporate Director of Environment and Place and its Cycling Champion to work with Cyclox to review if any immediate measures can be taken to improve safety.

In separate letters, I have requested a

14.TH3 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Hayes – County Council response on safety of cyclists at The Plain roundabout

full review of dangerous cycling spots, development of an action plan for The Plain in particular, and the involvement both of Cyclox and other communities and representative groups in the design of solutions to cycling dangers.

I also reiterated the point that cyclists will be much safer when road space can be reclaimed from private car use, which requires a transportation debate over a 12-month period. This is to ensure that everyone who wants to influence the decisions which affect their lives can shape Connecting Oxford proposals.

I would be happy to provide additional information to Cllr Malik as needed.

15.TH4 From Cllr Smith to Cllr Hayes – Restriction of HGV use in City

Question

In common, I am sure, with all members of this council I was devastated to hear about the death of Dr Ling Felce in a road traffic accident at the Plain roundabout earlier this month and I send my deepest sympathy to her family.

The death of Dr Felce is the latest in a series of fatal accidents on our roads involving Heavy Goods Vehicles. Does the cabinet member agree with me that restrictions on HGVs entering Oxford are long overdue. These restrictions could apply during the hours our roads are busiest and could be used to promote the use of HGV vehicles with enhanced safety features such as side bars, sensors and direct visions cabs.

Will the cabinet member work with the Highways Authority to bring in such restrictions with the aim of improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians?

Written Response

As above, I want to associate with Cllr Smith’s condolences. It was clear from conversations at the vigil, when the Leader of the City Council and I were in attendance to represent councillors, that many share her concerns. It was important to attend the vigil to hear directly from people and understand exactly what they believe will make cyclists safe.

In a medieval city with narrow spaces for all road users to travel alongside each other comfortably and safely, I am deeply concerned about current and predicted volumes of use of our roads. There is no getting away from the need to provide a fairer balance of use of our roads. Our spaces have been designed around the private car at the expense of other road users. How we can redistribute space which gives a fairer deal to cyclists and keeps them safe will be critical. It was clear that many people we spoke with during The Vigil believe that the City and County Councils need to be moving

15.TH4 From Cllr Smith to Cllr Hayes – Restriction of HGV use in City

forward Connecting Oxford proposals.

Cllr Smith makes a valid point about the dangers of heavy vehicle use of roads, here and anywhere in the country.

The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership has a sprint group, coming to a close fairly soon, which is focused on greening last-mile delivery through the trialling of micro-consolidation centres and quiet delivery. The work is being funded and led by Oxford University, the County Council, and City Council, and includes the recruitment of expert and additional workforce to develop plans for full freight consolidation and a smaller scale pilot project which can be scaled up. Unipart, DPD and freight and logistic consultants are engaged. When I have met with representative of freight associations which typically rely on heavy freight, I have made the case for sustainable and lighter last-mile delivery.

I support Cllr Smith’s view that HGVs should be fitted with the type of safety features she references – I have, as such, written to the Department for Transport.

I would encourage Cllr Smith to be in direct contact to more speedily and effectively contribute to this work.

16.TH5 From Cllr Wolff to Cllr Hayes – Direct Vision Standards and licensing

Question

Since November 2020 there have been five cycling fatalities in this city. Four of them - those of Samantha-Sue Blackborow, Jennifer Wong, Ellen Moulihan and recently Ling Felce - were run over by lorries driving in or across marked cycle lanes. This cannot be a coincidence. So far, only one of the inquests has taken place, and that raised big questions about the ability of the bin lorry driver to see a cyclist even 2m in

Written Response

We are constantly seeking ways to improve safety for cyclists to try and prevent such terrible tragedies and we are currently working with the County on their Central Oxfordshire Travel and Connectivity Strategy with one of the key aims being to make cycling in the city safer by reallocating road space and reducing traffic flows.

Direct Vision Standards can also play a part and our preference would be for the

16.TH5 From Cllr Wolff to Cllr Hayes – Direct Vision Standards and licensing

front of him. In London, driver visibility became a major concern some years ago following a series of similar fatalities, and Transport for London introduced Direct Vision Standards and licensing as a consequence. Although the City Council is not the Highways Authority, does the cabinet member believe that this is something that should be investigated, and what power or influence could he exert to make this a possibility in Oxford?

government to introduce a national standard for HGVs based on the London scheme. That would enable lorry permit schemes to be adopted in urban areas throughout the country, ultimately resulting in all HGVs complying with a nationally approved standard and I have written a letter to the Department of Transport urging them to introduce national legislation.

I have also sought clarification from the County Council on whether the power exists for highway authorities outside London to introduce Direct Vision Standards or whether it has been introduced using powers that are only available in London.

17.TH6 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hayes – ZEZ: bus gate plans

Question

In the event that the county's recently-published bus gate plans are implemented as outlined, they might be expected to eliminate a very large proportion of the traffic from the city centre. In that scenario, is there a need for a separate zero-emission zone? If so, what do you expect an enlarged ZEZ to achieve that isn't accounted for by bus gates?

Written Response

Thank you for raising this question again and I am happy to reiterate the rationale for the ZEZ *and* Connecting Oxford (what the Councillor has described as bus gate plans). Connecting Oxford includes the introduction of traffic filters and a WPL to reduce traffic volumes, a city centre-wide ZEZ seeks to reduce the emissions of the remaining traffic, so that we can further improve air quality in the city.

18.TH7 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hayes – Marston Ferry Road bus gate

Question

In the county's recent transport strategy press release, you justified bus gates writing that we "must back Oxford's buses to... move around the city without significant delays". By this yardstick the proposed gate for Marston Ferry Road seems like the odd one out, that being a road which is neither particularly prone to congestion, nor a carrier of a large

Written Response

Marston Ferry Road carries a number of bus services (the 14, the 14A, the 700, the H2 and the H4) and passengers on such services experience congestion as they travel to or from the JR Hospital, Cherwell School, and other venues— implementation of a traffic filter will be beneficial as a result.

I agree that proposed traffic filters should

18.TH7 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hayes – Marston Ferry Road bus gate

number of buses. Would you support holding off on that gate unless a clear need arises, thus permitting direct transit between Headington, Marston and North Oxford, similar to how local links are retained between New Hinksey, Iffley and Cowley?

be operated at times and in ways to best achieve the desired outcome of overall reduced traffic volumes, faster bus travel and safer cycling. I want everyone to be free to move anywhere, anytime.

The final decisions on the location and timing of operation of traffic filters and exemptions are subject to detailed traffic flow modelling and a year-long democratic discussion with citizens and many key stakeholders before going out to a full public consultation.

19.TH8 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Hayes – Provision of public bike pumps

Question
How many public bike pumps have been installed in the city within the ring road in total and by city council ward? Which wards lack any provision of public bike pumps?

Written Response

The locations (wards) of the bike pumps were:–

Cowley Road (St Marys)	Opposite Tesco by bike racks
The Plain (St Clements)	Magdalen Bridge by bike racks
Broad Street - Parks Road (Holywell)	Outside Western library building by bike rack
St Michael Street (Holywell)	Opposite Cycle shop
Banbury Road (Summertown)	Junction of South Parade outside HSBC

However, only the Broad Street pumps remains in situ, the others have been removed as they are broken. The original design from company 'Cyclehoop' were too easily damaged and we had lots of complaints about them not working. For this reason we trialled a different type at Broad Street and so far it continues to work. The bike pumps were funded using a one off budget for cycling improvements and at the moment further funds have not been identified. Locations were chosen based on cycling hot spots.

20.TH9 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Hayes – Seacourt Park & Ride

Question
Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council

Written Response
As explained in previous questions, the

20.TH9 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Hayes – Seacourt Park & Ride

how many times the Seacourt Park and Ride extension has been open and in public use since the official opening?

extension has been closed whilst usage at Seacourt is low. We built the extension because the original Park and Ride was full very early in the morning, before the pandemic (as evidenced as part of the planning application), and there was significant demand for an extension.

We expect the peculiarly low levels currently being experienced to be temporary and for increased usage to return. Usage is increasing and when it reaches 80% capacity in the main car park—the threshold we have set to open the extension. We can open within 24 hours' notice when it does. The extension is closed for prudent financial reasons: we want to minimise the maintenance costs while the site is underused.

We are supporting the growth in Park and Ride by promoting periods of free parking during the pandemic, supporting communications campaigns with the bus operators, and, in January 2022, we launched a new scheme with Oxford Bus Company so that regular visitors using a Park and Ride can benefit from a combined bus and parking season ticket for the first time. It means Oxford Bus Company season ticket holders using the Park and Ride services will be able to add parking when buying their bus season ticket. Season tickets are available for four weeks, 13 weeks, or annually, and I would encourage Cllr Fouweather to share this information and back buses.

We are exploring how we can urgently promote bus travel and Park and Ride at a time when bus patronage is challenged because of the pandemic. We offered our suggestions and proposals to Oxfordshire County Council to reprioritise space on roads to buses, but unfortunately these have not been taken forward. Separately, we're working alongside the County Council to develop

20.TH9 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Hayes – Seacourt Park & Ride	
	Connecting Oxford.

21.TH10 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Hayes – Seacourt Park & Ride capital expenditure	
Question Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council how long the capital expenditure on the Seacourt Park and Ride extension will now take to be recouped?	Written Response The original business case anticipated a 17-year payback period for the extension. The income generation has been delayed by c. two years owing to the pandemic and the business case will be reforecast once we have clearer information.

22.TH11 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Hayes – Westgate Shopping Centre car park	
Question The Westgate Shopping Centre Car Park is a magnet for motorists and on recent weekends has been full up. This has caused traffic chaos on the surrounding roads with the resultant queues. Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council what plans he has to overcome this before Oxford city centre completely seizes up over the forthcoming months?	Written Response At the request of this administration, senior officers from County and City Councils met in order to discuss congestion around the Westgate car park, particularly on weekends. This is also a topic that the Leader has raised with Westgate directly, asking them to work with transport planners on alternatives. Westgate reiterated their eagerness to work with the councils to explore options for supporting increased usage of alternative modes, including the Park and Rides. As part of this we will seek to gain a better understanding of why people continue to go to Westgate through surveys and what would incentivise a change. This can then be fed into the development of effective promotion and improvement of other modes. Having repeatedly urged Westgate to better promote Park and Ride I would expect them to begin this work urgently. There is a recognition that the car park itself cannot alone sustain the demand Westgate and City Centre needs to be successful. Peak hours' traffic

22.TH11 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Hayes – Westgate Shopping Centre car park

management continues to operate, closing the car park when it becomes full supported by Variable Messaging Signs. Unfortunately, people still choose to sit in the queues over alternative modes even when the car park is closed.

Taking forward Connecting Oxford, plans for which were restated on 17 February, is critical to ensuring congestion is tackled on our roads. If these schemes are implemented in the coming years, there will be significantly reduced car congestion as a result of people switching to bus, taxi, cycling and walking, away from private car use.

As these proposals are subject to ongoing technical development and engagement before public consultation and decisions later in the year and implementation from 2023, there is obviously a need for urgent action. Both councils are reviewing the options, but as an example, we are considering a review of wayfinding to and from and at Park and Rides to see if there are opportunities to improve the experience. We await a central government decision on the Bus Service Improvement Plan bid, which the City Council has heavily influenced, including upping the ambition of the County Council around seeking tens of millions of additional funding. If successful, this would support significant investment in quick changes to improve the bus experience in and around Oxford.

Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities

23.SA1 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Council support of the Ukrainian community

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Question

How is the Council supporting the Ukrainian community in Oxford in light of Russian attacks on the country?

Written Response

Oxford City Council – Community Services Team are working with the Oxford Polish Association, Oxford University Ukrainian Society and the Clarendon Centre. The team are in on-going conversations offering advice and support. The team have facilitated a discussion across the organisations leading to improved collaboration. This has resulted in the use of two units for collection and distribution of donations, which are free of charge.

We are have established an internal working group to ensure that we are able to respond to the emerging situation. We will continue to engage with the Countywide group (led by the County Council), which has been established to develop a co-ordinated response across the county.

We have also launched a webpage ‘Support for Ukraine’ on our website. This page sets out the latest information regarding:

- Homes for Ukraine
- Guidance for Ukraine Nationals
- Making a donation
- Oxford’s Partnership approach

We are committed to working with community groups and recently attended a meeting called by Asylum Welcome to discuss wider stakeholder responses to the situation in Ukraine.

This is an emerging situation and officers continue to work with local and national agencies to support the response to the war.

24.SA2 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Relocation support for Ukrainians relocating to the UK

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Question

Will the Council be supporting people in Oxford who wish to support Ukrainians to relocate to the UK, whether through the Family Migration Visa scheme or the Community Sponsorship Scheme?

Written Response

The Council are currently waiting for more information from Government on the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme to fully understand what role we need to play, as a local authority, in ensuring Ukrainian refugees are safely resettled in the local area. We expect this to involve safeguarding and accommodation checks and providing wrap around support. We do not know how many Oxford residents will offer rooms or units. We have currently taken the following actions to enable us to gather and work through the emerging information:

1. Internal Group

- an internal group has been established , with representatives from across the council to respond to the changing situation and formulate a viable action plan.

2. County-Wide Group

- A County-Wide group, including representatives from all district councils has been established to consider an Oxfordshire response.
- This will be chaired by Oxfordshire County Council.

3. Work with Local Partners

- We are continuing to work and speak with local partners to ensure our response meets the need.
- Oxford City Council were represented at We met with Asylum Welcome's meeting on Wednesday 16th March to discuss with a range of local stakeholders what the local area and organisations can do to support Ukrainian refugees potentially arriving in Oxford.
- Oxford City Council already work very closely with Asylum Welcome

24. SA2 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Relocation support for Ukrainians relocating to the UK

	<p>and Refugee Resource to deliver the ARAP, UKRS and VPRS resettlement schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services have been supporting the Oxford Polish Association and Oxford University Ukrainian Society with their donation drives. <p>4. Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We published a press release on 4th March, which included ending our twinning agreement with Perm, as well as informing people that we are flying the Ukrainian flag from our flagstaff. • The press release also directed residents to the government website on the family visa scheme. • A ‘Support for Ukraine’ web page has been created on our corporate website.
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25. SA3 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Council support for collection/donations for Ukrainians

Question	Written Response
<p>What is the Council doing to support and promote organisations within the City collecting goods for donation to Ukrainians?</p>	<p>Oxford City Council have facilitated discussions between Oxford University Ukrainian Society and Oxford Polish Association, and the Clarendon Centre, which has resulted in Free of Charge use of two units for collection and distribution of donations.</p> <p>Community Services are working with these organisations to understand what support they need to continue the successful donation drives and look at opportunities for better collaboration between the two.</p> <p>Initial support includes, amplifying their messages and call outs for donations and volunteers throughout the Council's social media channels. Exploring</p>

25.SA3 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Council support for collection/donations for Ukrainians

avenues for ongoing support including access to the electric community van to access the ZEZ and utilising some community centres as donation points.

Conversations with these and other organisations in the city who are organising donations will continue to understand the changing needs as the situation develops.

Locality hubs have a [draft a plan](#) for us to respond to these requests

26.SA4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Pay roll funding for humanitarian relief

Question

Many organisations are offering employees the chance to donate via pay roll (which has certain advantages for employees) to the UNHCR, Red Cross, Disasters Emergency Committee, Doctors without Borders or other organisations providing humanitarian relief in Ukraine. Some are going a step further and offering to match donations from employees. Is the City Council considering doing this?

Written Response

We already have the ability for staff to 'Give As You Earn', which enables them to donate as much as they wish through Payroll to any registered charity.

Cabinet Member for Parks and Waste Reduction

27.LA1 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Arshad – No-mow policy

Question

Last year, the council adopted a no-mow policy for many roadside verges. Headley Way residents in particular complained that last year's maintenance regime led to several accidental collisions with low roadside barriers (intended to prevent pavement parking) which became

Written Response

After last year's long grass trial a review has been carried out which took into account comments and complaints from affected residents. Headley Way will not be included in the long grass verges this year.

27.LA1 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Arshad – No-mow policy

invisible in the tall grass. Will you ensure that this year we at least trim around such obstacles to keep them visible and prevent needless damage?

Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery**28.AH1 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – Solar panels****Question**

Taking advantage of permitted development rights to install rooftop solar panels is currently difficult due to the legislation's vague requirement that panels shall "so far as practicable, be sited so as to minimise the effect on the amenity of the area". This means in practice one cannot confidently assess whether plans are permitted and must seek a Certificate of Lawful Development, adding hundreds of pounds and considerable lost time to the cost of going solar. Some councils, such as Islington* make the process much easier by volunteering specific advice about how they assess this test. Will Oxford do likewise?

* <https://www.islington.gov.uk/-/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/planningandbuildingcontrol/information/adviceandguidance/20212022/20210831solarpanelsguidance.pdf>

Written Response

I would agree with the questioner that the Permitted Development Right for rooftop solar panels is less precise than for some other PD Rights. I would not characterise the wording as 'vague' though. As with many other tests in planning law the wording here is subjective; the same is true for example for definitions of harm in the context of heritage assets. It is this subjectivity, rather than a reduction to tick-box exercises, that allows the planning system the flexibility to take into account very local circumstances that would not be possible with a nationally prescribed definition. Subjective tests require judgements to be made, whether by planning committees or by planning officers, and I think on the whole the system is better for that.

As the PD Right here requires a subjective judgement to be made, there will always come a point when someone needs to make that judgement. This is recognised in the Islington document referred to in the question, which makes clear that applicants will only be certain that their proposal is covered by the PD Right if they apply for a Certificate of Lawful Development. The City Council already provides advice on the PD Right via the Planning Portal, and we can include more detail in the FAQ section of

28.AH1 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – Solar panels

the planning website, but doing so will not remove the subjectivity inherent in the wording of the PD Right any more than the advice note from Islington does. I would always advise applicants to seek informal advice from the Planning Department, and if unsure to apply for Certificate of Lawful Development.

Leader of the Council**29.SB1 from Cllr Malik to Cllr Brown – Oxford City Council link with the city of Perm****Question**

The Leader of the Council sent a statement about the link with the city of Perm to all the group leaders saying they not end Oxford City's links with Perm in Russia.

After few hours I learn from the media that Oxford City Council have decided to suspend the link with Perm. What was the reason of this decision and dithering? And what pressure was put on the leader to change her mind?

Written Response

There are a lot of inaccuracies in this question. I wrote a statement on 25 February which I shared with the opposition leaders to ensure cross-party agreement, which condemned without any reservation the Russian attack on Ukraine and stated that we would be writing to Perm to express our support for those opposing Putin's war and our condemnation of the Russian aggression. We did not comment on the future of the link in the letter or the statement at that point, but indicated that we hoped to hear from them.

By Friday 4 March, the Russian attacks on Ukraine were even more hideous, we had not had a response to our letter, and I felt that we had no alternative but to break off our link with Perm. No pressures were exerted on me by anyone to make that decision. I felt it was the right thing to do and I asked Cllr Ed Turner who was acting on my behalf to liaise with opposition leaders and others to prepare an announcement of the ending of the twinning link. Since the

29.SB1 from Cllr Malik to Cllr Brown – Oxford City Council link with the city of Perm	
	announcement, I have had a number of emails from people involved in the Perm Link who are upset at the decision. While I understand their point of view, I do not share it.

30.SB2 from Cllr Wolff to Cllr Brown – Termination of twinning link	
Question I had always understood that establishing a formal twinning link with another City requires a vote at full council. Does the leader not agree that public communications on the establishment or termination of any twinning link should only be made once such a decision is endorsed by Council?	Written Response Before the last few weeks so had !! However, it turns out that is not the case. Matters that are reserved to full Council are set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 5.8-5.15 of the Constitution. All other matters are Executive functions. Establishing or terminating a twinning arrangement is therefore an Executive decision within the remit of the Leader of the Council. Due to the changing circumstances the decision had to be made quickly, with time only for limited consultation. Due to the sensitive nature of the matter I have formally notified Council this evening as part of the Leader’s announcements, as a matter of courtesy; there is no requirement to seek an endorsement of the Council.

31.SB3 from Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Brown – Oxford Brookes University industrial dispute	
Question Staff at Oxford Brookes University are currently engaged in an industrial dispute through their union UCU, alongside fellow workers at universities across the country. The dispute centres around issues of pay, inequality, workloads and casualisation This is set to include a second wave of strike action from 28 March - 1 April. Has the Council expressed a view on the dispute? And would the leader be willing to: a. Write to the UCU branch	Written Response I have spoken to Alistair Fitt about this dispute and in turn I know he has spoken to those who are currently taking strike action. I am very sympathetic to the issues being raised by the UCU. In particular the casualisation of lecturing staff is shocking and pay does not reflect the very long hours of preparation, support for students and marking that is undertaken. I hope that in the interests of both university staff and students across the country this dispute can be ended

31. SB3 from Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Brown – Oxford Brookes University industrial dispute	
<p>expressing the Council’s solidarity with staff and the UCU?</p> <p>b. Write to the Vice Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University - Alistair Fitt - calling for him to use his influence within national negotiating bodies to bring an end to the dispute and secure a fair and just deal for workers?</p>	satisfactorily and quickly.

32. SB4 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Brown – Economic strategy publication	
Question	Written Response
<p>Will the results of the consultation on the economic strategy be published in full? If so, will these clearly delineate the nature of responses between different stakeholders?</p>	<p>The results of the recent consultation will be published with the Cabinet Paper that is scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in June 2022.</p> <p>A consultation report will accompany the Cabinet paper. This will summarise the responses received both through the main survey but also in the workshops held. This will provide analysis of comments made by different stakeholder groups e.g. business or resident but to be clear it will not identify the individual business or resident. It will also provide a demographic breakdown of individual respondents by age group, ethnicity, postcode etc. where possible.</p>

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