

Written responses to supplementary questions on minute 22: Questions on Notice from Members of Council

The initial question and written response are included for completeness.

Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities and Culture

SA3 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – Updating Council policies for trans and non-binary inclusion	
<p>Question What progress has been made on updating council policies following the motion on trans and non-binary inclusion passed at the November 2021 full council?</p>	<p>Written Response Over this period the Council has been working on developing and has published its EDI Strategy, which shows an absolute commitment to EDI. We now have an EDI steering group that includes officers from each service area and have implemented EIA training to senior managers that is now being cascaded through teams. We are currently recruiting an EDI Lead and a new post in the People team to provide the capacity that will enable further work on EDI, including the actions from the motion to be worked through. In relation to the small gestures (point 5 in the motion) an increasing number of council staff have chosen to add pronouns to email signatures.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question Does the EDI Steering Group mentioned in the answer have representatives from the communities it is working on behalf of? If it doesn't, how are you engaging members of these communities in the work that steering group is doing?</p>	<p>Written Response The EDI Steering Group has representatives from each of the council's service areas, these people are actively involved in the community. To develop the EDI Strategy we held 12 focus groups with people from a range of backgrounds that has helped inform the work of the steering group. Our Thriving Communities City Conversation will also enable a wide range of community conversations that will further shape our work. On a daily basis, our locality teams are engaging with the community, these conversations are often relayed back to the steering group to make sure we share our learning.</p>

SA4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Aziz – East Oxford Community Centre – gender neutral toilet provision

Question

Will the redevelopment of Cave Street and East Oxford Community Centre include gender neutral toilet provision?

Written Response

Yes, gender-neutral toilet provision is part of the plans at the new build element of East Oxford Community Centre.

Supplementary Question

Can you clarify whether there will also be gender neutral toilets at the Cave Street redevelopment?

Written Response

The redevelopment proposals for Standingford House Cave Street do include gender neutral toilet provision throughout.

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services

NC7 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman – Outsourced recycling

Question

To whom and where does the council send its recycling for processing? Do any of the outsourced contractors send any Oxford city council recycling overseas for processing, and if so where and to whom?

Written Response

Oxford City's Council mixed dry recycling is sent to N&P's Crayford Material Recycling facility (MRF) in Dartford, Kent where the materials are sorted and sent to final destinations – these are summarised below:

Recycled commodities, like many products, are a global trade. There is limited processing capacity within the UK. As markets change so does demand - for example newspaper and magazine readership declines as we continue into the digital age, cardboard packaging is rising as a trend with more and more residents shopping online. This means that in the near future there is likely to be additional processing capacity within the UK as waste and resource organisations look to develop facilities fit for the future. N&P Ltd is responsible for the material once it has been processed through the MRF. They operate in both national and international markets to ensure maximised financial and environmental

NC7 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman – Outsourced recycling

benefits. N&P's objective is to ensure that the quality products generated are positioned and placed within the UK, European and global markets in a timely, professional and balanced manner to ensure the secure, reliable, financially stable and environmentally sustainable use of the recyclate.

As an ethical business they work hard to ensure all our output materials are used appropriately and in the most sustainable way. N&P aim too to minimise the environmental impact associated with the movement and end use of materials. The end destinations used for Crayford MRF outputs are carefully selected in line with this, in compliance with the Waste Hierarchy, and also dependent upon their appropriateness and distance from site. It should be noted that ocean going bulk carriers emission levels per tonne per km travelled can be just 1/30th of that of a road-going heavy goods vehicle. Given the existing lack of recycling capacity for paper and card in the UK the alternative domestic end uses would be landfill or incineration.

In terms of compliance and traceability there is a process of approval before materials are shipped abroad, outside of the UK to EA Approved and Licence Reprocessing Facilities

A summary of the end destinations is shown below, a further breakdown of the Countries these materials are exported to can be provided but this may vary on a monthly basis. See **Appendix 1**.

Supplementary Question
I recognise that the end destinations can vary; could you please provide further details and example countries of where these materials are being sent for processing by N&P?

Written Response
Please see the briefing attached at **Appendix 2**, which sets out where our recycling is undertaken. It breaks down what is done in the UK and the EU, alongside what goes to countries including India, Turkey, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand. The issue remains that the UK does not have sufficient recycling capacity in a number of areas.

IT2 From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Thomas – Occupancy rates within city centre retail properties

Question

What is the current number of empty retail properties in the city centre? How has this changed over the last 12 months? What is the Council doing to increase occupancy rates within city centre retail properties?

Written Response

There are 591 units in the city centre. Our last audit was conducted in March 2022, excluding units under refurbishment, under offer and not available, there are 31 units, equating to a little over 5% vacancy. In 2021, applying the same criteria, there were 28 units equating to just under 5%. The UK national average of empty units in March 2022 was 14.1%, so we can see that Oxford is comparing well to other city centres in spite of the economic climate. The City Council attracted £1.875m of HMG Getting Building Funds to deliver Meanwhile in Oxfordshire, working with OxLEP and the wider group of councils in Oxfordshire. The aim of the project is to bring empty units back in to use working with Makespace, who are supporting occupiers and landlords alike. County-wide this has so far has enabled 33 organisations to occupy empty spaces, and secured 28,000 sq. ft. of space, which will support c.110 occupiers to 2025. In Oxford this has helped businesses and organisations into the Covered Market, Gloucester Green, Park End St, and Templar Square among others. 15 of those organisation are Oxford based so far.

The City Centre Action Plan, adopted by Cabinet in June, has a project around focusing on empty units and a series of actions. This is available at: [Oxford City Centre Action Plan 2021 - 2030: Consultation Draft](#). It should also be borne in mind that the Council is part of some substantial developments in the City Centre, including those at Oxpens

IT2 From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Thomas – Occupancy rates within city centre retail properties

	brought forward by OxWED, and also the Boswells hotel project, and these will increase the number of people living and working in the city centre, which will make it even more vibrant.
Supplementary Question I notice in the response it said the national average of empty units, do we have an idea of our rates in comparison to other cities like Oxford?	Written Response Oxford city centre had 5% available vacant units at the last count in March 2022, with another count scheduled for next month. We have approached Canterbury, Cambridge, Winchester, Bath and Bristol to find out how we are comparing. Canterbury's June vacancy rate for available units was estimated to be 6-7%. Surprisingly, Cambridge don't track vacancies but they would guess it is approximately 8-10%. Winchester is at 9.9% available units and they commented that Oxford's position is commendable in the current circumstances. No response was received from either Bath or Bristol.

Cabinet Member for Health and Transport

LU7 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Upton – Seacourt park & ride

Question At the last Full Council meeting in March Councillors were informed that the extension to the Seacourt Park and Ride Car Park had not yet been used. Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council if this is still the case – i.e. has there been any use of the extension and how many days has it been in use since then?	Written Response As explained in answers to previous questions on this subject, the 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 low levels currently being experienced to be temporary and for more users to return. Usage is increasing and recently has
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LU7 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Upton – Seacourt park & ride

	<p>exceeded average occupancy rates of 65%. Officer observations on site are that the car park approached capacity on Mondays to Fridays in June. On that basis, although the threshold we have set to open the extension is that it reaches 80% capacity in the main car park, we have taken the decision to open the extension ahead of the expected official usage data. It was opened on 15th July 2022.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question Could we know exactly how long it has been left empty – where does this leave the payback period and how much has this now cost?</p>	<p>Written Response The completion certificate was issued with a date of 01/06/2021 and it was opened 11/07/2022. That means it was closed / empty for approximately 13 months. The final cost reported for Council Questions in September 2021 was £5.372m. This has not altered, although we are expecting the return of the £80k bond lodged with County and now due for return after 12 months. Pre-pandemic in 2019-20 the estimated payback period for the additional spaces at Seacourt Park and Ride was estimated at around 17 years with an internal rate of return of 6.7%. Following the pandemic, attendances at all council car parks reduced significantly. In 2020-21 for instance park and ride usage was only 13% of the pre-pandemic 2019-20 usage. In 2021-22 usage figures increased to 60% of 2019-20 figures and in the first quarter of 2022-23 these figures have again increased to 80% of the pre-pandemic usage figures. Whilst there are encouraging signs of increases it is too early to say whether we will return to 2019-20 levels of usage since so many staff that previously worked in the city continue to work at home. Whilst we hope that usage figures do continue to grow for our car parks, clearly the payback on the Seacourt extension will have been pushed out further than the 17 years previously predicted. How far this payback has been pushed out is difficult</p>

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	to say with any certainty and like many decisions made by organisations in 2019-20, none of these could have had the hindsight of the impact of a world-wide pandemic.

Additional Information for: NC7 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman – Outsourced recycling

Oxford City Annual summary 21/22 of End Destinations for material processed at the MRF

	Inside UK	Outside UK	Total	Percentage in UK	Percentage exported
Mixed glass	3084.96	0.00	3084.96	100.00%	0.00%
Metals	570.29	144.52	714.81	79.78%	20.22%
Paper	492.32	2834.18	3326.50	14.80%	85.20%
Card	564.91	3157.14	3722.05	15.18%	84.82%
Plastics	1600.92	130.58	1731.49	92.46%	7.54%

Oxford City - End Destinations 22/23

Quarter 1 Period Summary

Oxford City's Council mixed dry recycling is sent to N&P's Crayford Material Recycling facility MRF in Dartford, Kent where the materials are sorted and sent to final destinations - these are summarised below.

Recycled commodities, like many products, are a truly global trade. There is limited processing capacity within the UK for some materials. As markets change so does demand for example newspaper and magazine readership declines as we continue into the digital age, cardboard packaging is rising as a trend with more and more residents shopping online. This means that in the near future there is likely to be additional capacity within the UK as waste and resource organisations look to develop facilities fit for the future.

N&P Ltd is responsible for the material once it has been processed through the MRF. The marketing the both nationally and internationally, to ensure maximised financial and environmental benefits. N&P's objective is to ensure that the quality products generated are positioned and placed within the UK, European and global markets in a timely, professional and balanced manner to ensure the secure, reliable, financially stable and environmentally sustainable use of the recycle.

As an ethical business they work hard to ensure all our output materials are used appropriately and in the most sustainable way. N&P aim too to minimise the distance any materials travel. The end destinations used for Crayford MRF outputs are carefully selected in line with this, in compliance with the Waste Hierarchy, and also dependent upon their appropriateness and distance from site.

In terms of compliance and traceability there is a process of approval before materials are shipped abroad, outside of the UK to EA Approved and Licence Reprocessing Facilities

A summary of the end destinations is shown below, a further breakdown of the Countries these materials are exported to can be

provided but this may vary on a monthly basis.

Quarter 1 Overview

For the first quarter of 22/23 the material streams that are exported outside the UK primarily include paper and card and aluminium, all other materials are recycled within the UK. Further explanation for the reasons these materials are exported is given below.

Oxford City Annual summary 21/22 of End Destinations for material processed at the MRF

Q1 22/23	Inside UK	Outside UK	Total	Percentage in UK	Percentage exported
Mixed glass	540.47	0.00	540.47	100.00%	0.00%
Metals	111.16	34.57	145.72	76.28%	23.72%
Paper	134.97	404.91	539.88	25.00%	75.00%
Card	161.09	435.55	596.64	27.00%	73.00%
Plastics	353.34	0.00	353.34	100.00%	0.00%

Markets for Paper and Card – currently the dominant material stream exported for recycling is paper and card,

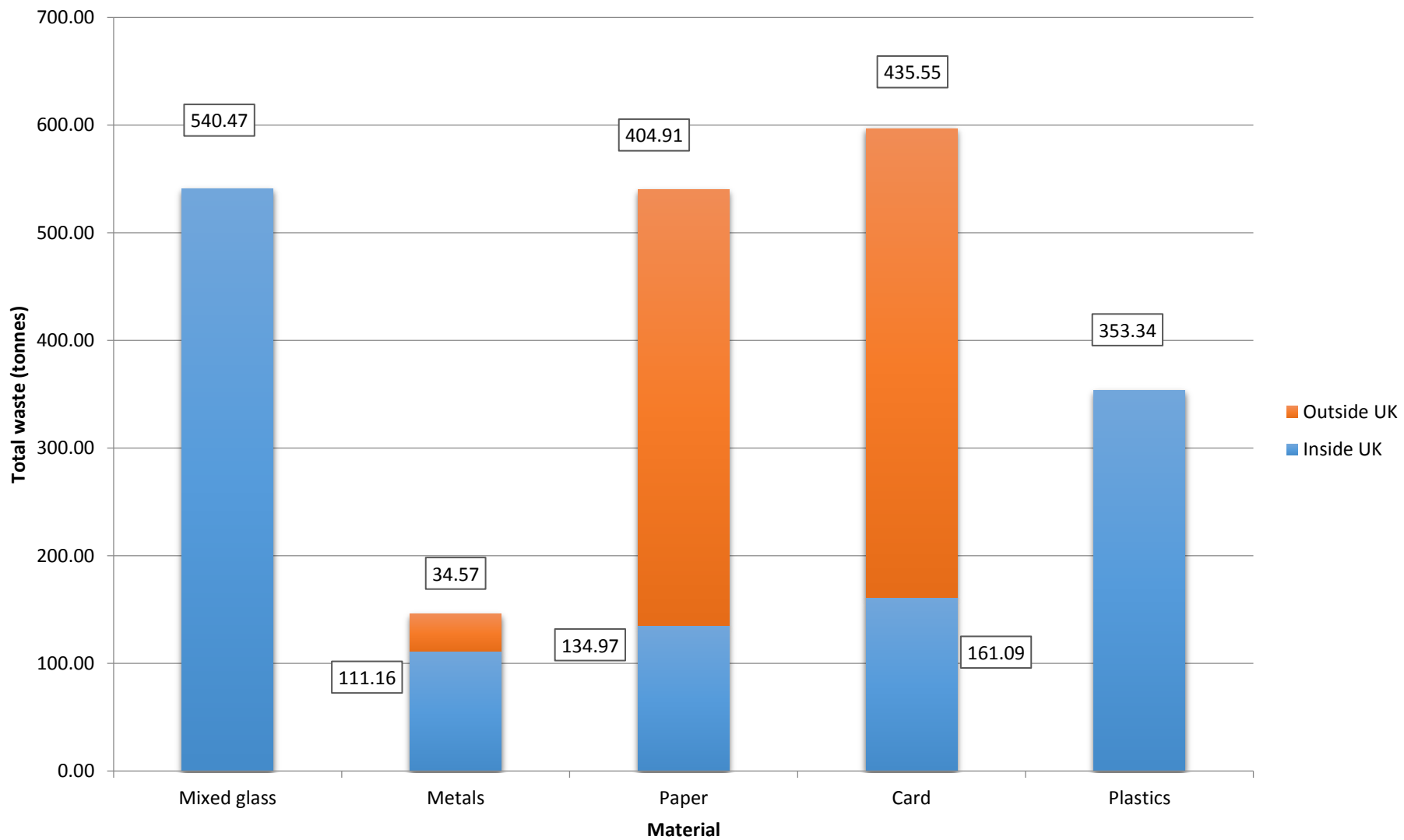
An article in Let’s Recycle in 2021 on the status of the current paper industry has highlighted some of the issues with reprocessing paper and card within the UK.

A call for growth in the UK’s papermaking industry rather than importing paper comes today from the sector trade association, the Confederation of Paper Industries. Highlighting how paper as a sustainable product is seeing growing demand, the Confederation argues specifically that the UK is importing too much paper for printing and writing and instead should build more paper mills to produce the material.

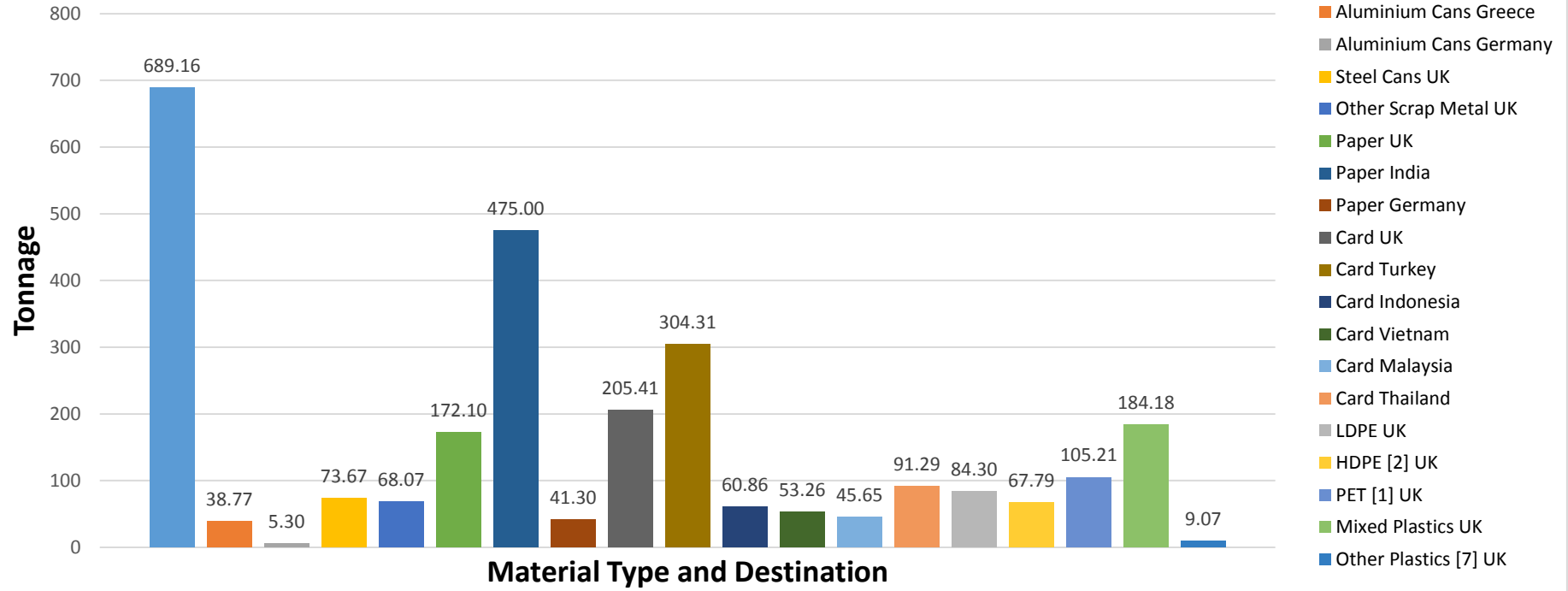
The UK Paper and Board Industry currently recycles around 3 million tonnes of recovered paper (used paper) annually. In

2020, around 6.6 million tonnes of used paper and card were recovered in the UK for recycling, of which 3.8 million tonnes were exported to overseas markets.” Also highlighted by the Confederation are the high costs of energy for UK papermakers compared to those faced on the Continent and the desire of the sector to support moves to decarbonise. However, CPI director general, Andrew Large, warned that there should be no move to decarbonise by simply offshoring industry

Base materials kept in the UK/exported in quarter 1 2022-23



Total waste and location from MRF in Quarter 1 2022-23



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