

To: Council
Date: 28 November 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 Cllr 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 Inclusive Economy and Partnerships; Leader of the Council

SB1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown – Tourist Coach Parking	
Question	Written Response
What is the status update on the city council's work to develop a coach drop-off and parking strategy for Oxford? Does the city council commit to extending the area requiring a coach permit in coordination with the county council and restrict coach drop off and parking on the	Within Year 1 and 2 of the CCAP, there is an action to 'support Oxfordshire County Council in short and long-term options for where visitor coaches can drop and layover in a way that lessens negative impacts, aligns to the Core Transport Scheme proposals, but

SB1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown – Tourist Coach Parking

residential North Oxford grid streets (Bardwell Road, Belbroughton Road, Charlbury Road etc..) where it is currently a problem?

supports visitor trips.’
In turn, this is partly picked up in the Central Oxford Transport Strategy (COTP).
City and County officers, during the pandemic explored options for additional on-street and lay-over parking. This identified potential city centre tourist coach drop off / pick up facilities proximal to Westgate/New Road/Castle Street/Thames Street/Speedwell Street.
It has also been identified that it is important to understand parking demand from the tourist coach sector. The City Council has put aside £20,000 in the Capital programme as a contribution towards this work. Whilst surveying the sector was paused during the Pandemic, as acknowledged in the City Centre Action Plan, we will work with the county council, and other key partners including the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) to engage the coach industry on their plans over the next two tourist seasons.
Officers will raise the parking permit extension in residential north Oxford for discussion with County Council as well as asking them to accelerate conversations with Oxford High School and the Dragon about a School Streets programme and better transport plans, acknowledging the significant negative impact on congestion in Oxford, as well as the residents of the local streets, of parents picking up and dropping off their children at these two schools.

SB2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown – Town Hall Portraits

Question

With the refurbishment of the Town Hall currently underway, what is the status update on improving the diversity of the town hall portraits in the council chamber and also in other rooms in the Town Hall so that they are more reflective of the

Written Response

A contractor has been procured to design options for how extra portraits could be added to the Council Chamber.
The contractor has spent time at the Town Hall and they are due to send us

SB2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown – Town Hall Portraits

gender and ethnic diversity of Oxford?

their concepts by the end of the month.

Once the design has been received they will be reviewed by our conservation officer. Costed options will then be developed early in the new year.

SB3 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Brown – Empty Retail Units**Question**

Could the cabinet member for small businesses inform me if there are any empty retail units owned by the City Council including any in the Covered Market?

Written Response

Currently, there are only eight retail units in Council control that are unlet in the City Centre. Of these, four have leases with new tenants being finalised by solicitors, one has attracted a new tenant and detailed terms are being agreed and the remaining three are being marketed. The letting to Black Sheep Coffee of the ex-Edinburgh Woollen Mill has also recently completed.

Within the Covered Market there are two vacant units that are being marketed with five further units that have lettings moving to completion by solicitors.

There are some additional empty retail units that are owned by the City Council but not in direct Council control. For example where tenant leases remain in place on non-trading units or leases are in the hands of administrators of the tenants business and likely to be assigned. The Grapes would fall into this category.

SB4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Brown – Investment Zones**Question**

Has the Council received a response from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in response to its letter on investment zones and its interest in taking part in similar schemes?

Written Response

No. Perhaps not surprisingly considering the changes of Secretary of State and indeed policy in this area. We await clarity on policy in this area but remain interested in trying to persuade government to invest in much needed infrastructure such as investment in affordable housing and sustainable

SB4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Brown – Investment Zones

transport to support the existing high levels of economic growth locally.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; Deputy Leader of the Council**ET1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner – Business Rate Enforcement of Sweet Shops 1****Question**

What is the value of business rate arrears for the recently closed American Candy sweet shop on Queen’s Street and what action is being taken to recover these arrears? Additionally are there any business rates arrears due from American Candy Land sweet shop currently operating from 30 Cornmarket St?

Written Response

The information requested relates to the financial or business affairs of a person or business and I am advised by the Monitoring Officer, that in accordance with paragraph 3 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, it is therefore exempt information. There is an exemption (the public interest test), however the Monitoring Officer advises me that in this case the test is unlikely to be met and therefore it would not be appropriate for me to respond to the question in a Council meeting open to the public. I understand officers have briefed the questioner on this subject in private, and I am obviously more than willing to respond to questions about our policy and actions on business rate arrears in general terms.

ET2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner – Business Rate Enforcement of Sweet Shops 2**Question**

What was the value of business rate arrears for now closed Candy Land on 41–42 Cornmarket street? Is this retail property owned directly or indirectly by the city council and if so, are any rent arrears also due to the city council by this tenant and to what value?

Written Response

The information requested relates to the financial or business affairs of a person or business and I am advised by the Monitoring Officer, that in accordance with paragraph 3 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, it is therefore exempt information. There is an exemption (the public interest test), however the Monitoring Officer advises

ET2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner – Business Rate Enforcement of Sweet Shops 2

me that in this case the test is unlikely to be met and therefore it would not be appropriate for me to respond to the question in a Council meeting open to the public. I understand officers have briefed the questioner on this subject in private, and I am obviously more than willing to respond to questions about our policy and actions on business rate arrears in general terms.

ET3 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Turner – Dividend from ODS

Question

When will the city council finally receive a dividend from ODS?

Written Response

We already have. ODS delivered a dividend in its first year of trading 2018-19 of £1.247 million. Their business, like most businesses, was severely affected by the impact of COVID pandemic. A revised reduced dividend payment of £600k reflecting the adverse trading conditions was agreed by the ODS Board in respect of 2020-21 and recently paid to the Council. The 2021-22 statement of accounts is still subject to external audit and no dividend has been declared in respect of this year although I understand that one will be, once the accounts have been signed off. It should be noted that in addition to the dividend return which is derived from surpluses and efficiencies from company operations, ODS pays the council for support services provided, interest on vehicles purchased and depot rentals, which over the 6 year period of the contract are estimated to be around £30 million.

ET4 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Turner – Renewable Energy Infrastructure Returns

Question

How is the Council ensuring that it will benefit from any unit price rises

Written Response

Within the Ray Valley Solar (RVS) loan (Salix grant element) the loan

ET4 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Turner – Renewable Energy Infrastructure Returns

generated from the renewable energy infrastructure that it is funding? In other words, how are the returns from these projects changing?

repayments (capital and interest) are independent of any energy unit price rises. The agreement has set an interest rate of 1.45% on the Salix loan and annual return of the capital as outlined in the repayment schedule.

A related area in the agreement to this question is the overage mechanism clause around community benefits that highlights that if increases in prices of the sale of energy from RVS result in a community benefit surplus exceeding the £124,444 outlined in the agreement that the additional surplus is “directed to fund carbon emissions reduction projects within the council’s functional energy area.” So Oxford City Council will have a say in where the surplus benefit is directed under those conditions.

Regarding returns linked from solar PV installations across the Council’s estate then any renewable electricity used directly in the buildings where the Council pays the energy bills will be reducing grid-sourced electricity spend at the prevailing unit of electricity rate – so will naturally track those increases and related avoided costs (unit rate projected to be ca30p/kWh electricity through our procurement contract through LASER shortly). The other revenue element – where the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) is in play is RPI linked so will change each year over the 20 year FIT contract in line with inflation.

Recognising the benefit of solar PV or other renewable energy installations as a measure towards achieving the Council’s Net Zero carbon goals as well as energy cost savings, the Council is continuing to look at potential opportunities for further investment in renewable generation either through additional on-site installations on Council roof tops or assets across the estate or via capital investments into local renewable generators and also purchase of energy from these generators via power

ET4 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Turner – Renewable Energy Infrastructure Returns

purchase agreements (PPAs) or similar.

ET5 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Turner – Botley Road Closure Small Business Compensation**Question**

What help and support will the council offer to small businesses in West Oxford who face a downturn in trade and increased transport costs during the Botley Road closure?

Written Response

This is a Network Rail scheme not a City Council scheme and funding has not been made available to us to provide to businesses.

Businesses can apply directly to the VOA for a reduction in their rateable valuation for the period of disruptions where they can demonstrate a “material change in circumstances” as a result of the works. More details are available [here](#).

The decision on whether there can be a reduction is for the VOA not the City Council. However, the Leader has written to the VOA to alert them to the likelihood for forthcoming applications and asked them to consider the applications sympathetically where the evidence provided to them shows businesses ability to operate have been negatively impacted. We encourage businesses who are concerned to contact the VOA as soon as the works starts. We will make this information available to local ward councillors to pass on locally.

Cabinet Member Leisure and Parks; Deputy Leader of the Council

CM1 From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Munkonge – Green Flag Award**Question**

The strong impression of local people is that there are issues with the care of flowerbeds and the like in Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Parks, and that this is connected with the council's decision not to take part in the Green Flag Award

Written Response

Given the challenges in the wider economy and the impact on public finance, ODS continue to strive to do the best job possible within resourcing constraints, managing Cutteslowe and the other 105 parks across Oxford.

CM1 From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Munkonge – Green Flag Award

scheme. Can the councillor let us know what the impact of that decision has been?

Regarding the specific issues, the beds surrounded by box hedging are being maintained by volunteer groups in Cutteslowe Park. The box hedging has blight and was cut back to mitigate it spreading to healthy sections of the box.

The team have been working on the herbaceous bed for the past couple of weeks and are moving on to the other beds after this has been completed.

It is also worth noting the need to become more sustainable around water use and providing habitat, nectar and food sources year round – this has led to move away from seasonal bedding to more sustainable planting.

Whilst a decision was made to no longer participate in gaining Green Flag accreditation, the team continue to work to many of the principles within the award, particularly around continuous improvement.

CM2 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Munkonge – Child’s Cycle Park

Question

Would the City Council be willing to allocate some of the unused space in Marsh Park to a community-led ‘child’s cycle park’ as has been so successfully done in Faringdon, encouraging young children from all backgrounds to learn to cycle?

Written Response

We are aware of the cycling facility at Faringdon that has been funded and is operated by the community.

This type of facility is a good way to enable an accessible and safe way to engage young people to learn to cycle. However, unfortunately the Council does not currently hold any allocated budget for this project either for the development of this facility or for the ongoing maintenance and operation for this.

In addition to budget, as a first key step a suitable site and feasibility funding would need to be found. This is also challenging given the pressures on our green spaces. Cowley Marsh unfortunately wouldn’t be suitable due to the space being used up through regular usage through team sports such as

CM2 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Munkonge – Child’s Cycle Park

football and cricket.

We have also been contacted by other councillors and communities who are similarly interested in this type of facility within their local areas. If there are community groups who may be interested in this then we would need to understand from them what their funding and operational plans would be.

CM3 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Munkonge – City Allotments

Question

With international food security becoming more unreliable, and with Oxford’s allotments in need of significant investment - including the need for secure fencing, clearing of vegetation or trees, ditches being redug, removal of dangerous historic waste and a fit for purpose supplies shed is the Council planning on investing more in the city’s allotments as a matter of utmost urgency?

Written Response

The Council works closely with the community food system in the City including the allotment associations. We recognise the challenges around both food poverty and insecurity and the positive role that allotments can play in relation this. There are currently c30 allotment sites within the City and we have been working with each of the allotment associations on new leases. The new leases will make the responsibility for the sites clearer, but Allotment Associations will need to seek funding, and plan for expenditure related to fences etc. The Council will retain responsibility for any Council owned buildings which will include keeping them wind and watertight and managing any asbestos if appropriate. Most of the Associations contract the Council’s direct services to undertake the work to meet their lease obligations to manage the sites.

The Council invests regularly in the Allotments by way of a grant system, whereby part of the rental income is ring-fenced and Associations can apply for funding for projects to improve the site.

LS1 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Linda Smith – Checks for Moulds

Question

The recent news regarding a toddler's death due to mould in the social housing has highlighted the need for clean, well aired homes. Could the cabinet member give me reassurance that tenants requests for help to cure mould are being given timely help and advice?

Written Response

We prioritise all reports of damp and mould.

We followed up on all reports of damp and mould last year and will do so again this year.

We have initiated an improved process of inspection of damp and mould issues with ODS ensuring we have done everything we can to manage condensation, eradicate damp and ensure actions taken are effective.

We will be checking for:

- Suspected rising or penetrating damp
- Presence and condition of mechanical extractors
- Air circulation obstructions
- Presence and condition of air inlet vents
- Functional heating which is in use

We will also be:

- Carrying out mould treatments
- Record and monitor results

Any issues ODS cannot diagnose or resolve will be referred to OCC area surveyors. We will refer to our energy advisers any tenants who are struggling to afford heating and ventilation, which may contribute to condensation.

LS2 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Linda Smith – Selective Licensing Scheme

Question

How many privately rented properties in Oxford have so far been successfully registered under the new Selective Licensing scheme and what proportion of such properties (excluding HMOs, which

Written Response

Our aim was to start issuing licences from 1st December onwards but we are ahead of schedule. The council procured and implemented a new licensing software system within 6 weeks, created

LS2 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Linda Smith – Selective Licensing Scheme

are licensed separately) would this represent?

a new applications team of 11 staff and went live on the 1st September as required by the government. As of the 21st November 3,776 applications have been received. The first full licence was issued on 24th October, and up to the 18th November 332 draft and final licences have been issued, which is 3.3% of the anticipated total. In addition we know from working with the largest 25 letting agents in the city that we will receive at least 7,625 “early bird” licence applications, which exceeds our original estimate of 7,500.

LS3 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Linda Smith – Communication with Leaseholder Tenant Ambassadors**Question**

How can communication with Leaseholder Tenant Ambassadors be improved, given recent incidents of ambassadors being unaware of significant changes to work planned in their buildings?

Written Response

Surveys for replacement fire rated front doors in flats were carried out as part of a planned programme. Changes in regulation required that the programme had to be changed to prioritise tower block flats. This was not communicated to those previously surveyed. An apology has been issued. Property Services have now implemented area based surveyors to oversee all programmes and improve communication with residents.

LS4 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Linda Smith – Ukrainian Refugees**Question**

How many Ukrainian refugees will potentially face homelessness in Oxford when their placements come to an end at Christmas? What percentage of people who have expressed an interest to host Ukrainian refugees, has the city council contacted?

Written Response

As of 2/11/22 314 Ukrainian individuals, including 85 school children, have arrived in Oxford under just the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Hosts on the scheme agree to at least 6 months of hosting. Hosting arrangements have had staggered start dates from March meaning the 6 month mark will end over a period of time for different guests, at this point some will be able to continue in hosting arrangements or find alternative

LS4 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Linda Smith – Ukrainian Refugees

housing options.

Due to the challenges many guests will have finding alternative accommodation, the City Council will work to rematch Guests to other Hosts when arrangements come to an end and have established a 'Rematching team' for this. The team provides countywide service and is being hosted in the City Council. The service will also link Guests in to additional statutory homelessness support to help find alternative accommodation when required.

In Oxford City there were 671 people who had submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to be a Host. The City Council has now contacted all of these potential hosts through a combination of email and phone calls. There are 39 people still interested in being a Host now with a further 20 stating they will in the new year.

LS5 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Linda Smith – Asylum Seekers Housed in Kassam Stadium Hotel 1

Question

Can the portfolio holder provide an update on how the Council is seeking to support asylum seekers who have been housed in the Holiday Inn at the Kassam Stadium by the Home Office?

Written Response

The Council acted immediately when they were informed by the Home Office about the use of the hotel and an Environmental Health Officer visited within an hour of the notification to check conditions and establish what support was needed. Since then we have been leading and co-ordinating the multi-agency response to ensure necessary support such as health care is provided by our partners. The Locality Manager has been working with Asylum Welcome and Care4Calais to assist the Home Office contractors running the hotel to support the asylum seekers by providing advice and access to essentials such as clothing. This work is being delivered alongside support from Thames Valley Police who have a dedicated resource

LS5 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Linda Smith – Asylum Seekers Housed in Kassam Stadium Hotel 1

that works with asylum seekers and refugees to develop relationships and provide education on life in Britain. We will be continuing to work with statutory partners, voluntary agencies and community groups to provide support.

LS6 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Linda Smith – Asylum Seekers Housed in Kassam Stadium Hotel 2

Question

What communication has the Council had from the Home Office about the asylum seekers housed at the Holiday Inn at the Kassam Stadium since the last update provided to members by the Executive Director for Communities and People?

Written Response

Since the last update there has been no direct communication from the Home Office regarding the Holiday Inn Express hotel.

We have been communicating with the contractors who have been appointed by the Home Office to manage the hotel.

LS7 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Linda Smith – Homes for Ukraine

Question

How many Ukrainians matched with households in Oxford through Homes for Ukraine are staying in this home beyond the initial six-month placement?

Written Response

Surveys have been distributed across Oxfordshire to Hosts at the 4 month point of their hosting relationship. 82% of Host responses stated they were intending to Host beyond the 6 months.

While this response from Hosts is positive the situation remains fluid and therefore the City Council and its partners continue to work together to prepare to support any Guests unable to continue with their hosting arrangement.

AH1 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 1

Question

What Local Plan policy improvements will you seek to ensure that housing supply outpaces demand so as to net reduce our unmet need?

Written Response

The current Local Plan 2036, like all local plans, has to identify and provide for the economic, social and environmental needs of the city, including identifying the city's housing need. Had it not done so, it would not have passed the NPPF paragraph 35 tests of soundness at Examination. The new Local Plan 2040 will aim to strike the same balance. Officers are currently working through the responses to the Regulation 18 consultation that has just completed, and there will be a separate consultation on the housing need element of the Plan in the next few weeks, as previously reported.

AH2 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 2

Question

How can LP2040 more concretely specify affordable housing viability tests so as to avoid developers using these to spuriously evade their obligation to 50% affordable housing?

Written Response

The current Local Plan, following the guidance for paragraphs 34 and 57 of the NPPF, makes it clear that viability for all policies including affordable housing is tested at the Plan making stage, meaning that only in very exceptional circumstances – which are clearly set out in the Local Plan – will a developer be able to argue that they are unable to meet their full policy obligations to deliver affordable housing and other social goods. Any such viability process is carried out using an open book process, and is robustly tested by the City Council's officers.

Thanks to the professionalism and dedication of the City Council's officers there have been no 'spurious' instances of developers avoiding their obligations, and to suggest that there are is to denigrate that professionalism, which is regrettable. The new Local Plan will

AH2 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 2

continue to reflect the NPPF and its guidance.

AH3 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 3**Question**

What additional measures can be taken in LP2040 to encourage densification of existing developed land (including building taller than existing district norms) so as to reduce the need to either build over green spaces or export demand to neighbouring authorities?

Written Response

I would recommend reading the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Regulation 18 (Preferred Options) Chapter 5, policy options R4 ('Efficient Use of Land'), which sets out exactly how the Local Plan will support increased densities and heights, and Chapter 6, policy options DH3 ('View Cones and High Buildings') which supports the continuation of the more permissive approach to taller buildings established in the Local Plan 2036.

AH4 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 4**Question**

How can LP2040 encourage energy efficiency measures such as solar (where not PD), external insulation and heat pumps where householders currently experience significant uncertainty that is likely to deter applications?

Written Response

The theme of addressing climate change has been threaded throughout the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation. Our intention is to have a range of policies in the new Local Plan which not only seek to support the shift to Net Zero Carbon, but also deliver adaptation to climate change.

More specifically, we have included a set of policy options that seek to deliver net zero carbon regulated energy, full net zero carbon operational energy and to tackle embodied carbon. We also set out an option for positively supporting retrofitting of existing buildings.

However it is important to note that planning system, as set out in the NPPF, sets out a range of objectives which can sometimes be in tension with one another. In these instances the planning system requires that the different objectives are balanced against one another, and that each case is treated on

AH4 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 4

its own merits. This subjectivity, which is inherent in the planning system as established by the 1947 Act and retained ever since, inevitably comes at the expense of some degree of certainty. The way to resolve this is not necessarily via a Local Plan, which sets city-wide policies, but through guidance for applicants, formal documents like Technical Advice Notes and so on, and the Planning Team continues to work on and issue these regularly.

AH5 From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Hollingsworth – LP2040 Survey**Question**

Can the councillor categorically state that all households in Oxford received the council's survey relating to the Local Plan 2040? What weighting will be given to the views of individual members of the public as expressed through the Local Plan 2040 survey?

Written Response

The survey was distributed by the Royal Mail's Door-to-Door service to every household in every postcode in the city, including those which run across the city boundary. Royal Mail have not reported any delivery issues, and the Council has not been made aware of any areas that have not received a survey. In addition there was extensive publicity on social media and via the local media, and advertising on local buses.

There is no weighting of responses when it comes to responses to a Local Plan; all views, whether by an individual, an organisation, or an institution, will be taken into account and weighed alongside the evidence base being developed for the Local Plan. The final version of all Local Plans has to confirm with the four tests of Soundness set out in paragraph 35 of the NPPF.

AH6 From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Hollingsworth – Oxford North CIL Contribution**Question****Written Response**

AH6 From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Hollingsworth – Oxford North CIL Contribution

In view of the Oxford North development's large anticipated CIL contribution, and the corresponding anticipated infrastructure demand created, will the city handle that CIL using an extraordinary process focused on the Wolvercote area rather than distribute 75% of it across the whole city as per the usual practice with CIL contributions in an area with a Neighbourhood Forum?

The City Council at the Full Council meeting of 26th November 2018 has already agreed to allocate all the City Council's share of the CIL arising from the Oxford North development to fund highways infrastructure around the development site. This was finalised in a CIL agreement dated 23rd March 2021. The agreement specifies the works that the CIL will be spent on, and that the funds will be paid to the County Council at the point that they complete the specified works.

AH7 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Hollingsworth – Affordable Accommodation**Question**

Has the Council considered building more co-sharing and co-living properties in order to ease the pressure from lack of affordable accommodation and to be more energy and carbon efficient?

Written Response

This form of tenure is unlikely to be suitable where the Council is the landlord given the nature of social housing tenancies, but our Local Plan policies encourage such schemes to come forward on suitable sites.

AH8 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth – Save Bertie Park Campaign Group**Question**

Will the portfolio holder agree to meet with the Save Bertie Park campaign group this year, to discuss their deep concerns about the loss of a valued green space?

Written Response

I am happy to meet the campaign group, although they have made their views very clear in their correspondence with me and their widely distributed publicity campaigns which for some reason feature a 20 year old picture of me. I will use the opportunity to make clear my support for the much-needed housing scheme on the site, something that forms part of successive Local Plans.

AH9 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth – Botley Retail Park**Question**

Botley Retail Park is classified as Flood

Written Response

The policy is a national one, not a

AH9 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth – Botley Retail Park

zone 3b, (functional floodplain). Will the portfolio holder commit to challenging the Environment Agency as to why this land can remain operational and safe in times of flood, for employees in multi storey offices or labs but not for residents in homes?

specific one for this site, and is set out in Annex 3 of the NPPF. While the Council could write to the EA asking them to change the designation of much of the site as 3B floodplain, and to the Government to ask them to redefine what vulnerable and less vulnerable uses for sites in flood zones are, I think it is highly unlikely that it will result in a change of policy by either. I would therefore not regard it a good use of scarce planning officer resources to do so.

AH10 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Hollingsworth – Local Plan

Question

Has the Council considered how it can better involve residents in the process of bringing sites forward for development through the Local Plan? In particular, can the Council include processes that allow residents to suggest where they would like to see development take place?

Written Response

The Council would be very happy to hear proposals for development sites for the Local Plan at any time, whether from land owners or from individuals. We have an open and ongoing [Call for Sites](#) published on our website with a guidance notes and form to aid submissions. It is important to note that a site cannot be added to the Local Plan for development if its owner does not support the allocation, as it would fail the third Soundness Test in the NPPF (that a policy is Effective – in other words, it is deliverable).

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services

NC1 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Chapman – Fines for Littering

Question

Oxford city council signs in the city centre say that dropping litter, chewing gum or cigarette butts could cost you an £80 fine. How many fines have been issued by the city council for littering over the last 12 months and what is the value of

Written Response

In 2021-22 the Council issued 54 FPNs for littering and received £3,525 in fines and so far in 2022-23 a total of 8 FPNs have been issued which has resulted in £600 of fines being paid.

NC1 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Chapman – Fines for Littering

the fines issued in total by the city council?

NC2 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Chapman – Aareon QL 1**Question**

Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council if the QL system is now fully operational in all the areas it was intended to be implemented in?

Written Response

The previous problems experienced with the billing of works undertaken by ODS for the Council has now been resolved satisfactorily. The billing backlog has been largely addressed and work in progress is now at acceptable levels. Agreement has recently been given by the QL Board to implement a system upgrade to the latest version of the system V11 which will go live on 21st November. Most areas are now fully operational and we are reviewing processes to ensure that they are working as efficiently as possible. The version upgrade will enable progress to be made to deliver the customer portal and choice based lettings activities with the final outstanding function, asset management, to be restarted, having been paused while the issues with ODS were being resolved. The team are in discussion with Aareon to implement additional functionality which will bring further efficiencies to the Council.

NC3 From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Chapman – Aareon QL 2**Question**

Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council why the consultant's report on the Aareon QL implementation has not yet been made available to Councillors?

Written Response

The preparation of the report has involved input from a large number of officers both within the Council and in Aareon. The report is currently being finalised together with responses to recommendations that have been put forward by the consultants. It will be made available to Audit and Governance Committee members at their meeting of 18th January 2023.

IT1 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Thomas – Event for Earth Day	
<p>Question</p> <p>Is the Council planning to mark Earth Day in April with an organised city event?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The Council will be marking Earth Day on 22 April 2023. Promotion will go out on OCC’s social media channels and staff will be reminded of the event in the internal newsletter. There will also be the opportunity to promote the Climate Action Oxfordshire website – the site is a partnership project between the Oxfordshire County and District Councils and Oxford City Council – which gives locally tailored advice on tackling climate change to residents and communities in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Oxford City Council works with many local groups (including Oxford Friends of the Earth, the Communities for Zero Carbon network and other Community Action Groups; as well as other non-climate focused community groups) to support action on climate change in the city. The Council can play a role in facilitating these groups’ Earth Day events. Any organisation or individual planning an Earth Day event is encouraged to register the event on EarthDay.org so that information about all the events in Oxford can be easily shared.</p>

IT2 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Thomas – ‘Do You Fuel Good’ Campaign	
<p>Question</p> <p>As part of the ‘Do you Fuel Good’ campaign, has there been any study or evaluation on what share of Oxford’s woodburner pollution is due to people who are using woodburners as a sole source of heat, vs. those who have them as a decorative addition to central heating?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>We have to date not undertaken such a study and we believe it would be difficult to undertake especially at the moment, as the split will likely be changing as electricity and gas prices increase. This is why the campaign aims to disseminate best practice and ensure that anyone who relies on burning, does so in the</p>

IT2 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Thomas – ‘Do You Fuel Good’ Campaign

least environmentally damaging way.

IT3 From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Thomas – Promotion of Energy Efficiency**Question**

What is Council doing to promote energy efficiency and the available grants and subsidies amongst residents and businesses?

Written Response

Oxford City Council is currently promoting the government’s Sustainable Warmth grants to help residents with the energy crisis. We are targeting people who are most likely to be affected by fuel poverty.

Oxford City Council part funds the Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) service. BHBH is a single point of contact for expert advice on improving energy efficiency at home. If residents aren’t eligible for Sustainable Warmth Funding there may be other funding available to them which they can access through BHBH.

Promotion is being done via social media campaigns, targeted mailouts, partnership working with key community groups such as faith groups, carers organisations and food larders. Oxford City Council has run a series of Cost of Living Events where information and support is provided to residents in person. Oxford City Council has produced a booklet full of ways to access support and advice on the cost of living crisis which includes information specifically relating to energy efficiency and grants and this information is also available on our website [here](#).

Oxford City Council is currently part of a joint bid with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub to access further government funds for the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG 2) funding.

To help support business take up retrofit, Oxford City Council is developing a sprint group with Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) partners on commercial retrofit, to promote best

IT3 From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Thomas – Promotion of Energy Efficiency

practice and shared learnings. It is also scoping effective routes for the ZCOP to engage with SMEs on this topic.

IT4 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Thomas – Sustainable Warmth Grant Money**Question**

How much of the sustainable warmth grant money is left in the pot? Should the Council consider lowering the criteria to encourage more people to invest in cleaner energy and lower energy use by, for example, saying houses with EPC rating of D can apply?

Written Response

The Councillor may have misunderstood Oxford City Council's role in respect of the £1.9m of Sustainable Warm grant money we have secured for retrofit of private sector housing. The criteria are set by Government which awarded the funding and we cannot amend that criteria.

Nevertheless, the Council's Energy Efficiency Officer is working with private sector landlords and homeowners to encourage take up of the funds. To date, 82% of the LAD3 funding available for households with gas-fired heating has already been allocated – with the work either out for survey or at design and install stage. That's 40 out of a possible 49 homes so far.

With the smaller pot of HUG1 funding for households with electric-fired heating, 35% is allocated (6 homes), and we are actively searching for another 14 properties.

The Council is currently part of a joint bid with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub to access the next tranche of government funds for the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG 2) funding.

IT5 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Thomas – Street Tree Planting Programme**Question**

What is the Council's policy on intensifying its street tree planting programme?

Written Response

Street trees forms an important part of the Council's Urban Forest Strategy and the Council clearly sees their value in reducing overheating and greening streets.

IT5 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Thomas – Street Tree Planting Programme

	<p>The Council currently receives no funding for planting or maintenance of new street trees. Planting of street trees is very costly, as quality tree pits need to be created to provide trees the best opportunity to survive. There are also challenges to planting on streets due to existing underground and over ground infrastructure limiting where trees can be planted.</p> <p>Despite these challenges the Council is committed to planting of street trees and we plan to plant a range of species in this winter planting season. We are also actively looking at how funding can be identified to unlock further street tree planting across the city.</p>
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Cabinet Member for Health and Transport**LU1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – HMO Bike Parking**

Question	Written Response
What is the councils' policy on requiring preexisting HMOs to provide bike parking for tenants as a requirement of licence renewal?	Housing legislation and case law specifies what can be covered by HMO licensing and the council cannot include the provision of bike parking as a requirement of licence renewal.

LU2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Cycle Path Obstruction

Question	Written Response
What actions have the car parks and waste management teams undertaken to relocate the glass and paper recycling bins in Marston Ferry pool car park so that they do not a) obscure the cycle path through the car park for school children cycling to the Cherwell School and other cycle path users b) result in cyclists having to manoeuvre around broken glass around the recycling bin?	ODS has made some changes to the layout of the Ferry Pool carpark Community Recycling Centre arrangement (on 21/11/22). This has reduced obstruction and improved visibility for all car park users – cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. There are limitations to what is possible to this arrangement due to the congested site. The issues of broken glass, and indeed

LU2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Cycle Path Obstruction

littering and even fly-tipping – are common to most CRC sites. Furthermore, overall volumes of recyclables collected from them are small - representing just 1% of overall total dry recycling collected in Oxford, as most of the items deposited at bring banks are already subject to kerbside collection. The Government's planned introduction of Deposit Return Schemes will likely push volumes lower. A number of other local authorities – including South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council have removed their CRCs and Oxford City Council may also consider the removal of bring banks.

LU3 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Frenchay Road EV Charging Point**Question**

By what date will the currently defunct Frenchay Road electric vehicle (EV) charging point be replaced with a functioning EV charging point?

Written Response

This was one of two chargers that was vandalised beyond repair. We have had to procure replacement technology. The contract is signed and we are finalising with an installer and with the transport authority Oxfordshire County Council. Officers' goal is to have a functioning charge point in place before Christmas however, this is dependent on the licensing approval process and if there are any other works occurring in the area. If this goal is missed the charge points will be installed early in the new year.

LU4 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Upton – Seacourt Extension**Question**

I note that the reported (from Oxontravel) figures for occupancy for the Seacourt P+R are almost always below 30% and never above 40%. Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council:

Written Response

a) The average monthly occupancy for Seacourt is circa 65%, but this can be considerably more over the weekend. We are not sure where the data used by Oxontravel has come from but it

LU4 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Upton – Seacourt Extension	
<p>a) What the peak and average monthly occupancy figures are for Seacourt since the extension was opened?</p> <p>b) If this state of affairs continues (ignoring the 12 months of 2023 for Botley Road being closed), how long will it take for the capital cost of the extension to be repaid?</p>	<p>has not been provided by the Council or ODS who manage the car park on the Council's behalf.</p> <p>b) The original business case had anticipated a 17 year pay back period for the extension. The income generation has been delayed by circa 2 years due to Covid and a reduction in use. The business case can be reforecast once we have a full 12 months of usage data which will be May 2023.</p>

LU5 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Bike Racks	
<p>Question</p> <p>Is the City Council planning on working with the County Council to increase the number of bike racks in the City Centre, specifically New Inn Hall Street / St. Michael's street where there is always a serious dearth of cycle parking?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>We are seeking to use our own capital funds in order to increase bike racks in the city centre and district centres too. There is a shortlist of 105 potential racks in the city centre currently being reviewed by County Council technical officers. St Michael's St and New Inn Hall St have both been considered and there are constraints to increasing racks on both streets, increased racks requiring removal of blue badge parking to achieve more bike parking. They will be reviewed again in future phases of the Cycling Infrastructure Fund project. In this phase, Bonn Square, Ship St and Queen St nearby all have proposals in progress.</p>

LU6 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Westgate Car Park	
<p>Question</p> <p>Is the council exploring options for taking back control of the Westgate Car Park (or increasing charges during the annual parking review) given that their charging strategy is undermining the ability of the City and County to control traffic levels within the City Centre and on Abingdon Rd?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As has been explained in previous answers to similar questions regarding the Westgate we do not have control over the parking charges at the Westgate car park and do not have the ability to take control of these or dictate charges.</p> <p>City and County Council officers have continued dialogue with Westgate</p>

LU6 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Westgate Car Park

shopping centre as part of the stakeholder engagement regarding “core transport schemes” and as part of the Park & Ride multi-agency working group. All parties are seeking solutions to the problems on the wider road network, caused by the number of people who choose to drive past Park & Rides even when the Westgate car park is full and closed.

We continue to work with the County Council on the progression of the core transport schemes which are fundamental to cutting congestion. In addition, where we have control we have tried initiatives. For example, to try to reduce the number of car drivers who go past a Park & Ride site to get to Westgate car park, on 13 July Cabinet decided to introduce a combined ticket for parking and the bus at a reduced cost to incentive usage. This has now been implemented.

LU7 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Low/Zero Emission Zones**Question**

Given the Botley Rd closure is likely to impact the launch of the bus gates, are there plans to expedite the LEZ/ZEZ bearing in mind it was announced in Jan 2020 that the expansion would be in 2021/22?

Written Response

The programme for expansion of the ZEZ is currently being reviewed with Oxfordshire County Council, the Local Transport Authority, in view of the Botley Road closure and delayed timeline for expected implementation of the proposed traffic filters.

LU8 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Upton – Mill Lane**Question**

Has the City Council received any updates from the County Council as to whether they will open up the end of Mill Lane for vehicles to directly access the A40 ring road?

Written Response

No, I am not aware that we have received any updates about the specifics of this issue. As a highways matter relating to a main road through Oxfordshire, I would suggest that your question is best directed to the County

LU8 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Upton – Mill Lane	
	Council’s Cabinet Member for Highway Management.

LU9 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Upton – Botley Road Closure Transport Compensation	
Question <p>What help and support will the council offer to West Oxford residents with mobility issues who face large increases in taxi fares when they travel to GP and hospital appointments during the Botley Road Closure?</p>	Written Response <p>The latest information that we have received relating to Network Rail and Oxfordshire County Council’s proposed closure of Botley Road in 2023 (essential to increase the capacity at Oxford station, to accommodate additional services in 2024), was at the Network Rail briefing for all county and district elected members on 14 November.</p> <p>Cllr Muddiman will therefore be aware that all stakeholders and the public await more detailed information about the implications of a potential January to December 2023 closure.</p> <p>However, based on what we already know, it is reasonable to assume that journeys from West Oxford to other parts of the city will be inconvenienced during any period of road closure on the Botley Road.</p> <p>Bus journeys will remain important for all West Oxford residents. Buses will operate to either side of the closure, so those looking to continue their journeys will need to walk or wheel a short distance and change buses.</p> <p>With regards to mitigating the impact of the proposed closure on people with mobility issues, this is the responsibility of Network Rail as the works promoter and Oxfordshire County Council, the highway authority, to consider these impacts and find mitigations where necessary. The City Council regulates the taxi trade, however it has no control over Private Hire Vehicle fares and while it does set the fares for the Hackney Carriage trade, it is not possible to set</p>

LU9 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Upton – Botley Road Closure Transport Compensation

different fares on different routes through the meter.

LU10 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Upton – Solar Lighting in Marston

Question

Does the portfolio holder agree that the cycle path in Marston (the section between New Marston Rec and the end of Edgeway Rd) would benefit from safe solar lighting in order to improve safety for those using the path and encourage others to use at night, which is currently unlit and scary?

Written Response

This area, like many in Oxford, may benefit from some small-scale solar lighting in order to encourage safe active travel journeys in gloomy and evening conditions. However, this is not Oxford City Council-owned land and this is not something that the council has funding available for.

Cllr Morris may wish to investigate whether use of ward councillor budget is possible here, or to contact the County Council Cabinet Member for Highway Management about whether this sort of lighting improvement is something that they are including in their relevant work streams, such as 'vision zero' or the LCWIP review.

I would urge Cllr Morris to work with Cllr Clarkson and County Councillor Lygo who have both spent a lot of time trying to achieve this improvement. The land ownership, overhanging vegetation, funding and some vociferous local objections issues make this a complicated issue to resolve but I'm sure that the three of you working together can make it happen.

LU11 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Upton – ParkThatBike Scheme

Question

Given the Council's scheme with ParkThatBike to provide free cycle racks for businesses, is there equivalent financial support to allow community facilities to install free bike racks, particularly given the current £1500

Written Response

The Park that Bike Scheme is open to community organisations as well as businesses. Of the options available, the Plantlock has no installation requirements, the 3-hoop "toast rack" and the wall rails are surface mounted

LU11 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Upton – ParkThatBike Scheme

quoted by ODS for installation of a five space rack?

with bolts, and the single Sheffield and heart shaped stands require root fill works. Organisations are able to select the installer of their choice, or install it themselves. We have also engaged with Life Cycle UK who run a scheme that covers install costs which we will be considering as a future project.

If you are aware of community organisations or groups, which would like to benefit from the ParkThatBike scheme, please encourage them to go to <https://www.parkthatbike.info/> to fill out a form.

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