

**To:** Council  
**Date:** 17 July 2023  
**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 Buses

#### Question

What progress has been made since November 2022 on the city council's work to develop a coach drop-off and parking strategy for Oxford and restrict tourist coach drop off and parking on the

#### Written Response

In January 2023 City and County Council officers met with local councillors, including Councillor Miles, to discuss options around tourist coach drop offs, parking and enforcement. As discussed in the meeting there are several

<b>SB1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown – Tourist Buses</b>	
residential streets?	<p>challenges associated with stopping tourist coaches entering the city centre to drop off. Park and Rides are available but it has proved difficult to get coach companies to use them. Many of these challenges were set out in the previous Scrutiny Committee review on tourism. Several actions were taken to explore implementation of the previously discussed additional drop off options including in Speedwell Street and enforcement options by county officers. City officers continue to work with those officers to implement the additional drop off locations. The City Council also maintain the £20,000 capital allocation to engage with coach operators on a longer-term strategy. This is now to be progressed as part of the Movement and Place Framework that will be developed in partnership with the county council. The reason for this is the issue needs to be looked at strategically in the round with other movement considerations in the City Centre and nearby affected areas. This project will commence in 2023.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Are there interim measures in place this summer before the Movement and Place Framework project commences this year? This also includes overnight parking in residential streets, and could you share which residential streets would be used for additional drop off locations?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>This is a complicated issue which we will continue to discuss with Oxfordshire County Council. There is a lack of legislation at our disposal, therefore, we are trying to encourage rather than enforce. The responsibilities are split between us and the County Council, and our responsibility encompasses air quality, rather than transport regulation. If there are specific streets that have been notified to us, we will share that information to you directly.</i></p>

<b>SB2 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Brown – Four Day Week Trial 1</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
Can the leader update members on what discussions she has had with the LEP	As previously reported I have had a number of discussions with both the LEP

and South Cambridgeshire Council about learnings from their four day week trials since the passing of the motion on the issue in March 2023?	and with the leader of South Cambridgeshire on this topic. As councillors are aware, this is a very live topic with a ministerial intervention to try and stop South Cambridgeshire from continuing their trial – although on what basis it is unclear. It is hoped that the trial can continue so that we can learn from it. As members are probably also aware, the directly employed manual workforce in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council are only now becoming part of this scheme.
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<b>SB3 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Brown – Four Day Week Trial 2</b>	
<b>Question</b>  Does the leader agree that the Westminster government seeking to prevent South Cambridgeshire Council from continuing its four day week trial is a significant overreach and local councils should be able to set their own employment practices in discussion with trade unions without government interference?	<b>Written Response</b>  Yes. Central Government has no business seeking to dictate employment policies to local authorities.  The provisional results of the trial show there are benefits from the approach and the trial and accompanying research project should be allowed to run its course.  As highlighted in much of the commentary to this action, there is a substantial risk of stifling innovation across the sector if government seeks to intervene in such matters.

<b>SB4 From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Brown – Covered Market</b>	
<b>Question</b>  When does the council plan to enable the return of the covered market into a place where people can do their weekly food shop from fresh food outlets, rather than it just supporting tourist souvenir outlets?	<b>Written Response</b>  I recommend that Cllr Sandelson reads the Covered Market Strategy documents. Incidentally, I haven't seen her in there when I do my weekly shopping at Bonners, David Johns, Cardews and the Oxford Cheese Shop and look forward to the return of a fishmongers and an additional butcher if we are able to find one. It is the case that many people shop in different ways now which is why the market needs to diversify and change but there is still room for traditional providers

	too. There are some excellent cafes and bars, a bookshop, several clothes shops, shops selling soap, handbags etc.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  <i>Can the Council agree to put more funding and benefits in place to encourage more food shops, in order to create more provision for local shopping?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b>  <i>Many conversations have taken place regarding the Covered Market and its letting policies, of which Cllr Sandelson seems to have missed. Shopping streets have changed considerably since the 1970's, as have people's shopping habits. The Covered Market has a policy and strategy in place, formulated in conjunction with the Covered Market traders, that recognises the importance of traditional food providers. However it also recognises the need to provide other providers to encourage more people to shop there to enable it to thrive for the future.</i>

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

<b>ET1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Turner – Gloucester Green Market 1</b>	
<b>Question</b>  Can you provide the details of the contracts of the Gloucester Green Market? How much is the council receiving & when is the contract due for renewal?	<b>Written Response</b>  The contract has recently been retendered and the new contract is close to completion. The annual income is anticipated to be in the region of £60k and is based on a share of revenue. There will be an annual reconciliation.  The new contract is 5 years with an option to extend for an additional 5 years. We received one compliant bid through the tender process.

<b>ET2 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Turner – Gloucester Green Market 2</b>	
<b>Question</b>  Why have the council closed the kiosks at Gloucester Green? How much revenue has the taxpayer lost due to this closure? What were the rents and rates	<b>Written Response</b>  The kiosk leases expired earlier in 2023. The kiosks limit the longer-term enhancement of this site and wider area of Gloucester Green. The benefits

on the kiosks?	arising from improvements to the visual appearance and openness of the southern side of Gloucester Green are considered to outweigh any short-term financial losses. This matter was the subject of agreement at Cabinet and has been through the proper process. The need to maximise the future potential of Gloucester Green is identified in the City Centre Action Plan. The previous rent of the kiosks totalled £76,250 per annum with rates payable of £15,000 per annum; there will be benefits to improvement to the public realm.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Why had the Council not made the decision to renew any of these leases on a 6-month basis?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>Cllr Brown responded in place of Cllr Turner - all options had been considered during the decision making process, and would not be reconsidered again.</i>

<b>ET3 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner – City Council Personalised Vehicle Number Plate</b>	
<b>Question</b> Why does the city council own a personalised number plate and what is its financial value?	<b>Written Response</b> The number plate is 'FC1'.  The registration plate is thought to have been given to the city by Lord Nuffield, who founded the former Morris car plant in Cowley and also the first number issued by Oxford as a licensing authority.  The value of the number plate is commercially sensitive and therefore not in the public domain.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>As the ownership of a personalised number plate can be considered an investment, as a city council committed to addressing cost of living crisis, do you think that possessing personalised number plate is aligned to council values?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>Cllr Brown responded in place of Cllr Turner - I am not convinced that Oxford City Council own this as an investment, however in general, would advise against the liquidation of assets to invest in revenue funding as a long-term financial strategy.</i>

<b>ET4 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Turner – Interest Rate Exposure</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>

<p>Do we know how badly the council is exposed to recent significant swings in the bank of England base rate?</p>	<p>The bank base rate increased to 5% on 23rd June and it is widely thought to continue to rise before falling back gradually to lower levels from next year. The Council currently has around £200m of external debt which was taken out in 2012 all relating to HRA self-financing. This debt is at varying levels of fixed rates of interest maturing over a period of 50 years. This debt will increase over the coming years to a peak of £600 million to finance new capital spend. We will mitigate risk by taking out short term loans in expectation that interest rates fall in the medium term. The Council's General Fund on the other hand has no external debt, preferring to make use of internal cash balances to finance its capital expenditure since the cost of doing so is less than the cost of taking external debt.</p> <p>Over the next few years the capital financing requirement, or underlying need to finance capital expenditure will increase to around £200 million. During this period the Council may be required to borrow externally since it will not have sufficient cash balances to fund such expenditure internally. Assumptions were made in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy agreed in February 2023 for rising interest rates. We are revising these assumptions to reflect the latest base rate rises, although our borrowing only occurs in later years of the MTFS. On a positive note, increased base rates leads to increases in investment interest earned on cash balances. In addition to the Council's position, one must also consider that of the Housing Company OXPlace, who currently finance their developments by loans from the council. Such loans must bear a subsidy control compliant interest rate comparable to the cost of external borrowing. The adverse impact of higher interest charges to finance developments affects the viability of such developments which in turn may affect the amount of dividend returns to the Council. Mitigations are being put in place by the Company to reduce the</p>
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	<p>amount borrowed and hence borrowing costs, including the request for stage payments for social housing purchased by the HRA.</p> <p>In summary, the assumptions made in the Council's Business Plans in February 2023 are sufficient to ensure that there will be no significant adverse financial impact of the current base rate rises. However, should interest rates continue to rise and remain for a sustainable period then the Council may need to adjust its spending plans in a number of areas. These assumptions will be reviewed when the budget, MTFs and Business Plans are reset.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Could you elaborate on the plans for OxPlace and the Council's obligation to lend to OxPlace, reflected to the rise of the cost of borrowing, and would this postpone its borrowing to sidestep the peak in expected borrowing costs?</i></p>	<p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>The council plans to lend around £80 million of loans to Oxplace over the next 4 years to finance its developments and purchase of properties from the Barton Development. When lending to Oxplace the Council is required to set 'subsidy control' compliant rates (this replaces the previous State aid compliant rates when the UK was part of the EU). Such rates must be set so as to not distort competition and must therefore be comparable to what interest rates the company could obtain from a private lender. Such rates therefore are influenced by the rises in bank base rates the most recent of which have seen rates rise by 0.25% to 5% which are reflective of Public Works Loans Board (PWLb) loan interest rates, to which the council adds a percentage mark up to reflect subsidy control. The Council is under no obligation to lend to Oxplace to fund its development schemes but it does see this as the most cost-effective way to make financial returns back to the General Fund which includes the mark up above which the council itself borrows at. Should Oxplace go elsewhere for its borrowing then there is clearly leakage of cash outside the Group. In the current climate of rising interest rates Oxplace (and indeed the Council) would not seek to postpone borrowing since this would</i></p>

	<i>impact on development, rather it would mitigate risk of increased interest rates by borrowing in the short term on the expectation that interest rates decrease over the next few years.</i>
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## Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks; Deputy Leader of the Council

### CM1 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Munkonge – Alexandra Park Car Parking and Consultation

#### Question

Council officers have been in touch with residents and stakeholder groups about removing, replacing and/or refurbishing either or both of the buildings in Alexandra Park. This is welcome as the buildings are in a poor state of repair. However the initial proposal involves increasing the number of car parking spaces in the park, contrary to the policy in the adopted neighbourhood plan and the wider objectives to decrease travel into and within the city by car. This is of particular concern as Middle Way and South Parade are heavily used by children travelling to school who already face issues from heavy motor traffic. In addition the narrow shared access to the park, with limited visibility presents difficulties for park users including many families with small children having to share space with cars. There is also very limited room for cars to turn around. Adding more parking will not make these problems easier. How does the council align the current proposals with the need to reduce car use both overall and specifically in this location as required by the neighbourhood plan? Are there plans to offset any increase in car parking in Alexandra Park with a concomitant or greater reduction in parking provision elsewhere?

Does the council see these proposals as part of a wider vision for Alexandra Park?

#### Written Response

Due to the initial discussions with Norham Garden Tennis Club for a lease to regularise their occupation, and the current condition of the buildings, Corporate Property have been working with the group towards a solution to satisfy both issues.

There has been an initial proposal submitted, and this has been developed with the tennis club with an awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan details a preferred reduction in parking, there are a number of conflicting priorities between the users of the park. Adding a small number of additional spaces to the existing car park would provide an opportunity to generate income towards the cost of the required works to support the tennis club. The intention has always been to support a local facility whilst minimising the financial impact to the Council, however the Neighbourhood Group's concerns are known and will be taken into consideration. As yet the plans are not finalised.

With regards to communication with ward councillors, ward councillors - Cllr Landell Mills & Cllr Miles were provided with a full briefing of the issues and possible way forwards on 13<sup>th</sup> February, along with a subsequent updates on 8<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July following a recent meeting with the

Finally, although it is extremely welcome that officers have taken the trouble to engage fully with local groups, ward councillors were not included in the discussions and found out about the plans from those local groups and not from council officers or cabinet members. Can we assume this was an oversight and ask to be fully included going forward?	tennis club.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>The Ward Councillors listed are incorrect, and could this be corrected for future briefings, and should be Cllr Fouweather and Gant.</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>This would be rectified.</i>

<b>CM2 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Munkonge – Fusion Gym Use at Spires Academy</b>	
<b>Question</b> Is it true Fusion has stopped public using the Gym at Spires academy? If true why?	<b>Written Response</b> No, the gym is managed directly by the school.  The gym closed over the pandemic and is currently used by pupils. The School are keen to re-open to the public and are working on options as to how they can do so.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Could the Council provide information from the school when the swimming pool would be reopened to the public?</i>	<b>Written Response Provided</b> <i>Oxford Spires Academy do not have a swimming pool.</i>  <i>They do not have a date to re-open the gym to the community but are working to find a viable way to do so as soon as they can, and we will continue to support them to do so.</i>

<b>CM3 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Munkonge – Advertising on Plain Roundabout</b>	
<b>Question</b> What is the revenue the council has made from advertising on the Plain roundabout over the last three years?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council owns a very small section of the roundabout. The advertising boards are not within the Council's boundary.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Contrary to the answer supplied by the Cabinet Member, council officers have</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>The original question was based on health and safety, of which we had</i>

<i>confirmed to us in copied emails that we do make revenue from advertising on the Plain roundabout. This answer implies that we are not making any money, so could you confirm this please and how much, if any, is earned?</i>	<i>responded to you. However, if there is any revenue earned from advertising, which would be quite minimal, I will provide this to you separately.</i>
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<b>CM4 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Munkonge – Allotments</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Does the portfolio holder agree that Oxford's allotments have an important role to play in building the city's resilience against the climate and ecological emergencies? Will the portfolio holder agree to prioritise providing support to the city's allotments?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Yes, allotments do play an important role in relation to building the city's resilience to climate and ecological emergencies. They also provide a source of healthy and nutritious food in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis – which links strongly to the Oxfordshire Food Strategy. While there is some limited officer time to support the allotment associations on key work strands, there isn't currently any additional budget available or officer resource to widen this.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <p><i>Do you not think you should reconsider your priorities and make food an essential service?</i></p>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <p><i>The allotment belongs to the parish council, and is encouraged in line with our Council policies.</i></p>

<b>CM5 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Munkonge – Oxford Ice Rink Parking Spend</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>There was a total of £580,000 spent on 25 parking places at the ice rink; How long it will take to recoup the money?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>Currently spend on this project is just over £25,000, and we hope not to spend the full budget available. The parking proposed is required for the operational use of the ice rink and therefore it will form part of the lease and management of the ice rink. Separate cost recovery is therefore not proposed. The issue is that depending on future development in the area, without this expenditure there would be no parking available, which would pose a serious problem for users and staff of the ice rink</p>

### **AJ1 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Rehman – East Oxford 1**

#### **Question**

Can the portfolio holder explain what communication the council had with residents occupying the East Oxford Games Hall prior to seeking an Interim Possession Order through the courts?

#### **Written Response**

Both officers and members visited site to explain to occupiers of the East Oxford Games Hall that the facility has been closed since COVID, is in poor condition and previously had seen low user numbers. The demolition of the facility will enable affordable homes on the site and also significantly improved community facilities at Princes Street. This scheme has been widely consulted upon within the East Oxford community. The illegal occupation of the Games Hall site risks jeopardising those two objectives the Council has committed to delivering. Conversations with those occupying the site confirmed that a number of them were from London rather than being Oxford residents.

### **AJ2 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Rehman – East Oxford 2**

#### **Question**

Can the portfolio holder set out how they and the council intend to improve community relationships in East Oxford over community assets, particularly as the redevelopment of East Oxford Community Centre continues?

#### **Written Response**

The Council has been working with the community in East Oxford on this project for over 7 years. This has included regular 1-1 meetings, reference group meetings, consultation events, newsletters and focus groups. Over the years this has had the oversight and regular engagement different cabinet members, senior officers and a variety of different project team officers who have all been keen to work with the community. This has not been easy and whilst there have been positive elements of working together, there have also been some unrealistic expectations of the Council.

We will shortly be looking to restart 1-1 meetings with the community tenants and will be continuing to send out regular newsletters.

<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>At the July full council meeting last year, the previous portfolio holder said they would hold a meeting with the relevant groups and Ward Councillors which did not take place will you agree to hold such a meeting?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>I would be happy to hold meetings with the organisations and Ward Councillors, however are ongoing conversations with these organisations and council officers trying to find solutions and/or relocation.</i></p>
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## Cabinet Member for Housing

<b>LS1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Linda Smith – Housing Arrangements for Families 1</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Is it acceptable for the council to house a family of five, a Mother and her four children, in one hotel room?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Oxford has significant housing need and homelessness challenges, and as a result the Council often has to temporarily place homeless singles and families into hotels for short periods, ahead of moving to longer term temporary accommodation. This is common practice for most local authorities.</p> <p>The Council only houses people in suitable accommodation which is in compliance with legislation and case law. Hotel placements are a nationally accepted option for homeless single people and families for short periods of time, while longer term accommodation is found. Before any placement in a hotel or other form of accommodation, officers review the offer to ensure compliance with suitability standards.</p> <p>At present no family exceeds 6 weeks in a hotel, in line with government targets, unlike many of other authorities in London and the South East facing similar housing and homelessness pressures.</p> <p>On occasion other statutory bodies, such as the County Council, house people in accommodation and transfer responsibility to us in line with the relevant legislation. When this happens, we take our own view on the</p>

<b>LS1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Linda Smith – Housing Arrangements for Families 1</b>	
	accommodation's suitability, and if found not to be suitable, they are moved as soon as it is practically possible.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>There is a case whereby 5 people are crammed in one room, at that point did officers attempt to find alternative accommodation.</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>I am not able to respond to individual cases, and a full report had been provided directly to you. However B&amp;B's are only used as a last resort.</i>

<b>LS2 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Linda Smith – Housing Arrangements for Families 2</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Why did the council rehouse a family with small children into a house where the washing machine doesn't work, where the stove does not work, with additional issues with water taps and heaters and bed bugs?</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>The Council only houses people in suitable accommodation which is in compliance with legislation and case law. Before any placement, officers review the offer to ensure compliance with suitability standards.</p> <p>We ensure these standards are met in all our Temporary Accommodation through a property checklist that is completed by officers ahead of any placement, which gives confidence that the property is in good working order. When a household is placed information is passed on and explained to them on how to report any repairs or other issues.</p> <p>As with any property, issues of repairs or animal/ insect infestation, can occur or be discovered once a household has moved in. If this occurs clients should contact the council immediately so they can be rectified as soon as possible.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>How are houses being checked prior to rehoming, to ensure they are adequate for homing?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>Properties receive thorough checks prior to being accommodated. As before, the full report provided to you would explain this issue you have reported.</i>

<b>LS3 From Cllr R Smith to Cllr Linda Smith – HMO Saturation</b>	
<b>Question</b> <p>Which are the top 5 streets in Oxford,</p>	<b>Written Response</b> <p>The HMO saturation policy (Policy H6 of</p>

that either in whole or part, currently exceed the council's HMO saturation policy? What steps is the council taking to reduce the saturation of these streets?	<p>the 2036 Local Plan) measures potential saturation along a 100m length from either side an application site, crossing into new roads wherever required to achieve the full length. This calculation is measured each time an application is made to ensure accuracy. As such we do not hold a list of saturation by street as this will not be relevant where application sites do not have 100m stretches of the same street either side of them.</p> <p>In order to control HMOs the Council enacted an Article 4, bringing small HMOs within the planning regime, thereby allowing the above policy to be applied. The citywide Additional Licensing we have had in place since 2011 has allowed us to ensure that all HMOs meet specific criteria, driving up the standard of accommodation and applying pressure to less reputable landlords, some of whom are likely to release properties back to family housing if the financial burden of improving properties is sufficient. There are no planning powers at our disposal to compel owners to convert existing HMOs into traditional housing stock.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Would the Cabinet Member like to see planning powers in place to compel owners who have HMO's back into traditional housing?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>There is a saturation policy that controls HMO's in any given area to prevent imbalance within the local community. Planning requirements are in place to ensure HMO's meet fit for purpose standards and the Council also demands licensing, which is beyond most Councils, therefore there are a number of checks on HMO's taking place.</i></p>

<b>LS4 From Cllr R Smith to Cllr Linda Smith – Private Rented Sector and HMO Quality</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>In the last 12 months, how many civil penalties have been given out to the private rented sector and HMOs for non compliance, and how many landlords have had their HMO licence removed for</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>6 Financial Penalties have been served, 1 licence has been revoked for non-compliance.</p>

contravening the housing act and not being fit and proper?	
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<b>LS5 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Linda Smith – Solar on Social Housing</b>	
<b>Question</b> The council's housing proposals have cut corners on solar PV -- Bertie Place houses had little per house, and Elizabeth Place had none at all. How will you avoid this happening in future?	<b>Written Response</b> OX Place has agreed a standard approach to meet or exceed the current Oxford Planning standard of 40% carbon reduction below 2021 Building Regulations. This is around 70% betterment to the pre-June 2022 building regulations. To set the context, our standard represents a considerable improvement from the carbon reduction standards across the country. Lanham, Bertie Place and Westlands exceed the Planning standard by 25%, 28% and 26% and national Building Regulations by 65%, 68% and 66% respectively. Clearly this is well beyond the minimum requirement so are worthy of celebration for the benefits they bring to both climate change as a serious global issue, and future residents of the homes.  Each site has to have an energy strategy based on individual layout and issues which meets that current design. For Westlands and Lanham for example, using air source heat pumps and a very efficient fabric, achieves considerably more than 40% betterment in terms of carbon saving. Solar PV panels are a very visual representation of energy savings for residents, but the bulk of the energy efficiency measures sit unseen in the fabric and heating systems of each home. The most important way to keep costs of heating down are to minimise the requirement for it in the first place, keeping heat in the home through good insulation and air tightness.  Any further ambitions of the energy strategy reflect the unfortunate but every present issue of the available financing to ensure the viability of the site. The cost of a building to achieve even a basic

	<p>40% betterment of building regulations is substantially more than a standard building regulations compliant building. At a time of ever increasing construction costs and the need to make an agreed financial return to the Council, this is a significant issue for OX Place as a company.</p> <p>However, each site is required to be (as a minimum) to be 'Solar PV ready' so that the potential for solar PV, should budget or additional funding become available, remains an option as design and construction progresses. This can be seen in both Bertie Place and Westlands as roof plans showing where all or additional PV would be situated have passed through the Planning system. This seems to be a sensible way of complying with the current already challenging energy performance targets, allowing for the future development of policy whilst delivering new homes within acceptable cost parameters.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Do you agree that revenue sharing is key to ensuring that solar panels are installed on social housing within budget?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>It is quite right that tenants should reap the benefit from savings from their energy costs made by solar panels, however there is a need to reduce carbon based emissions, and solar panels are not the only source of this.</i></p>

## Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities

LU1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Town Hall Bike Parking	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>A sum of money was budgeted for renovations of the bike parking in the town hall to be undertaken at the end of last year when officers were moved from st aldates into the building. Have any improvements been made with the allocated funding and if so, what changes</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The SAC offices had two bike shelters with a total capacity of 80, as part of the leasing agreement, the new tenant will have sole access to one of them. To maintain a provision of 80 bike spaces for city council employees, the bike shelter that would stay with the council was removed, with a new one installed</p>

<b>LU1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Town Hall Bike Parking</b>	
were made and at what cost?	on the same footprint. This was a dual height bike shelter with a capacity of 80. A budget of £30, 000 was allocated for this and the total cost for removal of the old shelter and installation of the new one was £28,750.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Issues have been raised regarding the space for bike parking for unconventional bikes, what solutions have been provided for this?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>This issue had not been raised with me, and I will look into this.</i> <b>Written Response Provided</b> <i>There is a limited amount of bike spaces available in the Town Hall, this space is just available to council staff and the pool bikes for staff to use. Changing the storage will reduce capacity which due to the capacity and demand is not feasible. The Town Hall team would be able to look at individual issues on storage to see if any solutions may be available.</i>

<b>LU2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Use of Park and Rides for School Buses</b>	
<b>Question</b> What is the city council's official position on the use of city council owned park and ride sites as a drop off/pick up location for school buses?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council has been contacted by a school and will be seeking to better understand the proposal. In principle, if the scheme resulted in fewer car trips into the city by parents driving children to school this could have many benefits in terms of congestion reduction and improved air quality. Coach pick-up and drop-off sites would need to be carefully considered and the council's priority must be ensuring that the Park and Ride service can run without disruption.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Could the Cabinet Member clarify if the Council is committed to allowing schools to use City owned P&amp;R sites as drop off and pick up points for school buses, if they are deemed suitable?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>In principle, it is an excellent idea to reduce car usage within the City, however would have to ensure that P&amp;R's could still function effectively and would require further investigation before any decision taken.</i>

**LU3 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Upton – Airbnb Enforcement****Question**

Will you ensure that sufficient resource is available for planning investigators to pursue full-time airbnbs?

**Written Response**

We have prioritised planning enforcement investigations into short term lets where there is clear evidence of a breach and a potential to take successful action. This has included proactively searching for properties in Oxford advertised as short term lets and has resulted in regular enforcement action. We are currently awaiting the result of two appeals against notices we have served.

**LU4 From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Upton – Cycle and Pedestrian Bridge at Jackdaw Lane****Question**

What plans does the City Council have for a new cycle and pedestrian bridge at Jackdaw Lane, to provide an alternative quiet route between East Oxford and the City Centre via the Thames Path (avoiding The Plain)?

**Written Response**

The City Council has no plans or funding for a pedestrian/cycle bridge in this location.

Oxfordshire County Council are the highway authority and in March 2020 adopted the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Oxford. This includes a proposal for a bridge at Jackdaw Lane as a major scheme: *OCR19-30 Potential bridge over River Thames to link to East Oxford via Jackdaw Lane.*

Our understanding is that this is not funded at the present time.

**Supplementary Question**

*Could funding be released to build a new crossing at Jackdaw Lane?*

**Verbal Response**

*There is no funding available to support this, and I am not aware that Oxfordshire County Council, the highways authority, had specified any available funding either.*

**LU5 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – New Build Cycle Infrastructure****Question**

Why does Planning not require cycle paths on new estates to be built to

**Written Response**

The LPA seek comments from the Local Highways Authority who are the

<p>'Highways-adoptable' standards (e.g., Barton Park and Elizabeth Place)?</p>	<p>responsible authority for adopting such paths. We take their advice on such matters, and by and large they do seek adoptable standards.</p> <p>It is also necessary to consider what the impact of reaching adoptable standards will mean for the wider scheme and whether there are other impacts that need to be factored in. In some instances, for example, the width of a path may be curtailed in order to maintain mature trees, as was the case with the Elizabeth Place/Westlands Drive scheme. In instances where a deviation from standard practice is recommended the Officer Report details the case-specific rationale.</p>
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<b>LU6 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Self-build Register</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>How many people are listed on the council's self- build register and how many self build plots have been a) offered and b) taken up by residents on the register over the last 3 years?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>In total there are 135 people on our self-build register. In addition, there is 1 group on the register which is made up of 20 members.</p> <p>73 of those are on part A of the register and have a 'local connection' to Oxford. 62 of those are on part B of the register and don't have a 'local connection' to Oxford.</p> <p>No plots have been offered or taken up in the last 3 years.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Why have no plots been offered, and therefore taken up in the last 3 years?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>I will endeavour to find out what leavers are in place to encourage developers to bring forward self-build as part of their offer on larger sites.</i></p> <p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>Policy H7 within the Local Plan 2036 (adopted in 2020) states that "on residential sites of 50 units or more, 5% of the site area developed for residential should be made available as self-build plots". Therefore, self-build plots become available to OCC on larger residential schemes which of course do not present themselves too regularly within a space confined city like Oxford. To date, since the Local Plan 2036 was adopted no</i></p>

	<i>residential schemes of the required size have been built out and therefore no plots have been provided to us to offer.</i>
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#### **LU7 From Cllr Landell Mills to Cllr Upton – Planning Appeal Costs**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
How many planning appeals has the city council lost in the last 12 months and at what cost to the council?	There have been 40 planning appeals decided in the last 12 months. The Council has lost only 6 of these, and in none of those cases were costs awarded against us. 24 others were dismissed and 10 withdrawn. Costs were not awarded against the council for any of these apart from one where, unusually, the appellant was awarded partial costs even though the case was won by the Council. However, the applicant has yet to lodge the proposed value of these costs We have, therefore, won 75% of the appeals heard by the Planning Inspectorate. By comparison the mean of cases dismissed for all local authority districts over the same period is 65%.

#### **Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services**

#### **NC1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Chapman – SAC Update**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
Can you provide an update on St Aldates Chambers?	In line with the recently published Cabinet papers for July, terms have been agreed with a new tenant at advantageous terms with a view to completing the letting in the late summer. The identity of the tenant and terms are currently confidential.

#### **NC2 From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Chapman – Microsoft 365 Migration**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
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By when will the city council have migrated to Microsoft 365 for all its staff and elected members? What have been the reasons for the significant delay of this migration?	<p>Migrations are underway to an agreed timetable and all relevant remaining City Council staff and Members should be migrated by September. Migrations are being undertaken on a team-by-team basis with training and support being provided in a bespoke manner to ensure effective adoption.</p> <p>Delays principally relate to our ability to recruit and retain the staff resource undertaking the technical migrations, the size and complexity of mailboxes, and legacy technical issues from different systems.</p>
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<b>NC3 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Chapman – Roadworks Embargo</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Would the council support an exemption to the usual embargo on roadworks during the festive period, to enable the fixing of the water pipe on Osney bridge?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The City Council would support the agreement of an overall programme of works on Botley Road, which minimises disruption for local residents and businesses and visitors. The County Council is the highway authority, so has overall responsibility for coordinating the Network Rail works to improve the Botley Road Bridge and the rail station, and the Thames Water works to fix the water pipe on Osney Bridge.</p> <p>We are not aware of a detailed proposed timetable for the Osney bridge works, but we understand that they will be required to happen over winter in order to minimise disruption to river journeys. If the settled proposal is for works to be undertaken over the festive period, then we would seek to understand the specific merits and demerits of the proposal before responding to it. The aim of expediting works will need to be balanced against the potential additional disruption of people making journeys on the Botley Road over the festive period.</p>

<b>NC4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Chapman – Tree Removal Comms</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>

<p>Will the council consider implementing comms plans for communications with residents when trees are due to be removed, beyond those statutorily required to be notified?</p>	<p>Officers follow the approach that is set out in the Communicating with the Public and Members section of the <b><u>Oxford City Council Tree Management Policy</u></b>:</p> <p><i>The Council will inform Ward Councillors and appropriate 'Friends Groups' of any major tree works such as pollarding or felling before any works are carried out in their ward/park. If there are a large number of trees to fell in one location, the Council may also erect notices to inform the public of the proposed works.</i></p> <p><i>In the event of emergency safety work that must be carried out immediately (e.g. storm conditions), the Council will notify Ward Councillors retrospectively.</i></p> <p><i>Felling is the last resort and will only be carried out when deemed necessary by the Tree Team. However, public safety is paramount and for this reason the public will be informed of tree works, via Ward Councillors and notices, but will not be consulted for approval.</i></p> <p>Council Officers and Ward Councillors are sent details of works to communicate to residents and community groups. It is not practicable or appropriate to issue public communications on every piece of work involving each individual tree in the city.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Every time a tree is removed despite the reason provided, residents are upset, which suggests that the process isn't working and would you undertake to provide additional communications to improve this?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>The policy is well designed, and if we had to go further than this, it would become very expensive to manage, however residents could contact me directly with any concerns.</i></p>

## Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice

AR1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Railton – Grass Cutting	
Question	Written Response
When city council will start cutting the	

<b>AR1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Railton – Grass Cutting</b>	
grass? Especially the road side verges?	Verges will be cut in July / August.
<b>Supplementary Question</b>  <i>Could the Council take road safety into account, when scheduling grass cutting next to ensure this is paramount?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b>  <i>The Council is dynamic in its response to road safety, and have been proactively mowing the grass at road junctions to ensure road safety.</i>

<b>AR2 From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Railton – e-Vehicles</b>	
<b>Question</b>  What plans does the City Council have in place to assist residents with transitioning to Electric Vehicles, and what is the role of the gul-e company in this?	<b>Written Response</b>  In July 2022, Oxford adopted its Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy ( <u>OxEVIS</u> ) which sets out clear targets for the city of Oxford to meet by 2026/27, 2030, 2035 and 2040, in terms of infrastructure deployment to meet expected EV uptake. The strategy is designed to seek a fair and equitable pathway to get those in Oxford that rely on a personal vehicle, ready to transition to EV. A following Delivery and Implementation Action Plan is on the forward plan for cabinet in September 2023. It covers a detailed action plan, risks and opportunities matrix, infrastructure procurement methodologies to deliver EV infrastructure, that stay ahead of the EV uptake trajectory and meet net zero targets; as well as associated council governance & resources required to deliver this programme of work.  These plans will include supporting measures to enable a simultaneous reduction of personal car ownership and car miles – such as increasing EV car club availability with EVI roll out.  The Council is actively working to promote EVs and help answer many of the questions people have over affordability, second hand market, range and so on. An EVs for Everyone event was held in May, supporting local people with information and knowledge around

	<p>EV adoption – the event included suppliers offering EV leasing, second hand EVs and EV car clubs, and information about other EV options available.</p> <p>The Council is currently working with Oxfordshire County Council and the District councils on plans to utilise £3.65m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant funding that is expected to be awarded to Oxfordshire to pump prime the commercial implementation of EVI. This will be supplemented within the city with the remaining Go Ultra Low Oxford (GULO) funds the Council holds.</p> <p>ODS has developed the Gul-e, a product at the leading edge of cable channel charging innovation. The Gul-e provides an easy-to-use, convenient, and simplistic solution that enables residents to charge their EV from a home energy supply, but with their vehicle parked on the street. Delivering the cost and efficiency benefits of home charging. A significant uptake of GUL-e by residents will reduce the City need for on-street charging and associated targets. Trials are now underway in a number of authorities and ODS is ready to scale this solution as needed.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Questions</b></p> <p><i>There are a number of constituents asking when the GULe product would be available to residents?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>The GULe project is still under trial and residents are able to register their interest at this stage.</i></p>

<b>AR3 From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton – Green Roof Roll Out</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>What plans does the city council have for further roll out of green roofs on bus stops roofs building on pilot on Morrell Avenue?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The Council are currently preparing to go out to the market to retender the bus shelter contract. Part of these discussions will also include how an operator can improve and introduce new technology and meet zero carbon</p>

	<p>objectives. There will be a balance to ensure a financial return to the Council.</p> <p>Officers are investigating alternative sources of funding to support any green initiatives around this.</p>
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#### **AR4 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Railton – Biodiversity Expert**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
Does the Council have Biodiversity expert?	Yes. Tristan Carlyle, Ecology Officer

#### **AR5 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Railton – Highway Trees**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
How many highways trees have been removed in the past four years, and how many of these have been replaced?	<p>It is worth reminding councillors, once again, that responsibility for our highways, pavements, verges and roadside trees sits ultimately with Oxfordshire County Council. ODS undertakes assessment and work to ensure trees are safe and where necessary undertake pollarding or even complete removal where trees are diseased or dying.</p> <p>Between April 2019 and March 2023 75 trees roadside trees have been removed. Oxfordshire County Council may have replaced some of these trees but if so the work was not undertaken by ODS.</p> <p>However, last year Oxford City Council funded the planting of 11 roadside trees on Cricket Avenue as part of the Queen's Green Canopy celebrations.</p> <p>We continue to discuss with Oxfordshire County Council opportunities to fund additional trees along our streets and are also exploring other sources of funding for this.</p>
<b>Supplementary Question</b>	<b>Verbal Response</b>
<i>Of the 11 trees planted on Cricket Avenue as part of the Queen's Green Canopy celebrations, do you know if any</i>	<i>I cannot provide actual numbers at this stage, however I will look into this and respond.</i>

<i>of those are still alive?</i>	<p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>Of 11 trees planted five are alive and appear healthy. Six have completely died or have declined to a point of no return - there may have been an issue with this batch of mainly Field Maple.</i></p> <p><i>Replacement trees have already been ordered and reserved with our supplier and will be delivered in due course. We have scheduled these trees for replacement 2023/24 winter planting season.</i></p>
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### Cabinet Member for Culture and Events

<b>JH1 From Cllr Malik to Cllr Hunt – Cowley Road Carnival</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Cowley road carnival has been incredibly successful over the years, especially when bringing the community together and boosting local businesses. After the Pandemic, the carnival this year would have tremendously helped the struggling businesses at Cowley Road. Why did the council fail to prioritise and fund £20k for the carnival?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Cowley Road Carnival successfully applied for 3 years of funding from Oxford City Council from April 2022-March 2025. As they confirmed they were not going to run a carnival event in 2022, and therefore would not have the associated costs, they were awarded a grant of £7K and advised, should things change, to apply for top up funding from the Oxford Community Impact Fund. Officers reached out to the carnival organisers on several occasions encouraging them to make an application and they did not do so. The Carnival did apply for Arts Council funding which they were not successful in bidding for and this was the critical factor in the carnival not happening. We are supportive of the Cowley Road Carnival and would encourage an early dialogue to start around planning for next year.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>What guarantees can the Council give to ensure that better engagement with the Cowley Road Carnival organisers takes place next year?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>The Leader advised that despite early engagement by the Council in supporting the Cowley Road Organisers, the plans were submitted late by the organisers, and in terms of the grant application, this was outside of the Council's control, and was too late to support this application to the Arts Council. The lessons learnt from</i></p>

	<i>this has shown that we need to start work much earlier to ensure that this important cultural event takes place in our City.</i>
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<b>JH2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Hunt – Implementation of New Street Trading Policy</b>	
<b>Question</b> What steps have been taken to ensure that street traders are no longer using single use plastic in line with the updated street trading policy?	<b>Written Response</b> Face to face inspection visits have been carried out by the Business Regulation Team (including out of hours when necessary) with 90% of street traders visited to date.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Of the 90% of street traders visited to date, what proportion were adhering to the new policy?</i>	<b>Written Response Provided</b> <i>25% of traders were found to be fully complying. Warning letters have been sent to those traders not adhering to the policy and follow up visits will be made to check for compliance.</i>

<b>JH3 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Hunt – Animal Welfare at Oxford Stadium 1</b>	
<b>Question</b> Has the Council spoken to the Oxford Stadium and owner Kevin Boothby following the incident of malfunctioning starting traps on 14th April to discuss how animal welfare can be improved?	<b>Written Response</b> Animal Welfare at the Stadium is not the responsibility of the council as it is governed by The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) which is a self-regulating organisation that governs licensed greyhound racing in Great Britain.

<b>JH4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Hunt – Animal Welfare at Oxford Stadium 2</b>	
<b>Question</b> How is the Council ensuring that animal welfare standards are maintained at the Oxford Stadium, a venue licensed for gambling by the Council?	<b>Written Response</b> Animal Welfare at the Stadium is not the responsibility of the council as it is governed by The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) which is a self-regulating organisation that governs licensed greyhound racing in Great Britain. The Gambling Act 2005 contains no animal welfare provisions.

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