

**To:** Council  
**Date:** 2 October 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 Councillor answering the original question.
4. This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.
5. Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

## Questions and responses

### Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships; Leader of the Council

#### SB1 From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Brown – Thames Water discussions

##### Question

What discussion has the Council had with Thames Water about the burst water main on Rymer's Lane, and has the Council asked Thames Water for an action plan to ensure that incidents like this do not happen again?

##### Written Response

Council officers have not held any discussions with Thames Water in relation to the burst water main on Rymer's Lane and it should be noted the Council has no statutory oversight for Thames Water's provision of water or sewage services.

However, on 27 March the Council Leader and Deputy Leader did hold a meeting with a senior Thames Water executive to highlight the Council's general concerns over the poor state of infrastructure in the city, this

<b>SB1 From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Brown – Thames Water discussions</b>	
	<p>followed the burst water main on the Eastern Bypass which caused significant disruption, as well as highlighting issues over repeated sewage flooding in some residents' gardens.</p> <p>On the same day, a question and answer session was also held with the Thames Water executive with all Council members invited to participate, and written answers to questions provided as a follow up.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>I just wondered whether you would be open to following up with Thames Water regarding the issue that occurred in Rymer's Lane?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>I am. It would be useful to have the exquisite points you wish to address, and I would be happy to have extensive correspondence with Thames Water because we need to.</i></p>

<b>SB2 From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Brown – Botley Road roadwork delays</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Given the news that the Botley Road will now remain closed until October 2024 and the ongoing works at the A34/A420 junction, what support can the council offer to residents and businesses along Botley Road facing increased costs and reduced incomes?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>This is a Network Rail scheme not a City Council scheme and funding has not been made available to us to provide to businesses.</p> <p>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 <a href="#">here</a>. The decision on whether there can be a reduction is for the VOA not the City Council. The Leader previously wrote 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. We have previously made this information available to local ward councillors to pass on locally.</p> <p>We have actively encouraged Network Rail to liaise with the businesses as well as</p>

	residents in the locality to ensure it is clear that the road and the businesses along it are open and accessible.
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**Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; Deputy Leader of the Council**

<b>ET1 From Cllr Gant to Cllr Turner – Fusion management fee</b>	
<b>Question</b> When did the council last receive a management fee from Fusion for managing the leisure centres?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council have agreed a payment plan with Fusion for the payment of the management fee plus utilities in monthly instalments. Five instalments have been paid to date and one in respect of August is still outstanding.

<b>ET2 From Cllr Gant to Cllr Turner – Dividend</b>	
<b>Question</b> When did the city council last receive a dividend from its three companies?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council has received 2 dividend payments from ODS, in the sum of £1.947 million. The last payment was made in 2022-23 for £600k. ODS have only recently finalised their 2021-22 accounts given well documented issues arising with the Housing Management System. The council is expecting more dividend to be paid once the 2022-23 accounts have been signed off, which is not expected until October/ November. The Housing Company is expected to pay the council around £15 million over the period 2023-24 to 2027-28. It is expected that the first of these payments in the sum of £2million will be made following the sign-off of the accounts by the Company Board expected at the end of September. I am not sure which third company the questioner is referring to.

<b>ET3 From Cllr Gant to Cllr Turner – Kassam Stadium lease duration</b>
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<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Why did the city council only agree to a 25 year lease with Kassam for the Kassam Stadium to be used for Oxford United Football club?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The City Council entered into the relevant Development Agreement in February 2000. As such, I do not think it is my place to speculate on the motivations of councillors and the officers who advised them at the time in reaching this decision. I would therefore refer the councillor to the associated report and minutes of the Council of 22 November 1999, which will have formed the basis for decision making at the time.</p>
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<p><b>ET4 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Turner – Council buildings affected by RAAC</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Which Council buildings are affected by RAAC and what is the council currently doing to ensure the safety of public buildings?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>There are no buildings currently confirmed as having RAAC used in them. OCC is carrying out a building profile risk assessment to identify buildings where RAAC might have been used. This has identified a number of buildings where RAAC could have been used and these are currently being surveyed to confirm RAAC is not present. If RAAC is found within any building it will then be assessed as to the condition and location. A plan of remedial work will be actioned if required or if in a good condition then it will be subject to ongoing monitoring.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>What is the timeline for the assessment?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>Quick as they are looking very proactively. I will revert to the Councillor outside of the meeting.</i></p> <p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>We expect the initial investigations to be completed by the end of December.</i></p>

<p><b>ET5 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Turner – Bramwell Place</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>In St. Mary's ward, Bramwell Place is owned by the City Council but appears to have very unclear parking rules which attracts anti-</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>We operate a free-of-charge resident parking permit scheme where parking spaces or poor parking practice need to be</p>

<p>social parking from individuals without permits and complaints from a number of local residents - but as it is not on the Highway, the County Council is not able to enforce the double-yellow-lines. Could you explain who owns Bramwell place car parking, who is supposed to be permitted to park there, and how we can improve enforcement? Given there must be other properties across the city with similar issues, does the City Council hold a database of how many City-owned parking spaces there are outside of official car parks, and who has permission to use them?</p>	<p>managed on City Council land, typically housing land. Where these schemes have been put in place, we have a record of who is permitted to park in which spaces. Our contractor enforces the permit scheme through the use of ANPR. Other permits for visitors or carers are available.</p> <p>In the case of Bramwell Place, officers will check the ownership of the land in question and carry out consultation with residents if appropriate. Officers have noted that the buildings and the area of land to the right of Bramwell Place (as you enter) may be owned by a private landowner.</p>
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**Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks; Deputy Leader of the Council**

<b>CM1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Munkonge – Marston Ferry Leisure Centre membership</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>What is the current number of centre members and has there been a change in the number of members and users at the Marston Ferry Leisure Centre as a result of current poor service levels and equipment maintenance?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The latest figures from Fusion show an increase in members and usage. The membership figures at Ferry leisure Centre up to and including July 2023 show there are currently 2219 members, which is up from 2145 in May.</p>

<b>CM2 From Cllr Smith to Cllr Munkonge – Bury Knowle House</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Bury Knowle House front door entrance to the Headington library and some of the window frames are in a poor condition. Could the cabinet member confirm when these will be receiving attention?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The Council are working to procure a design team to assist with this refurbishment project to better understand the works required. Any works will require budget approval, planning and listed building consent.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Am I to take from the reply that because it's going to require budget approval planning and building consent, that we won't see any</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>I'm afraid I cannot provide a timeline. However, I will speak to the Officers and come back to you.</i></p>

<p><i>improvements until after this winter and possibly not until later of next year. Is that correct?</i></p>	<p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>The surveys and investigations are being undertaken to understand the scope of works, it is likely planning will then be required. Once we have the specification and confirmation of costs, we will be in a position to confirm the anticipated programme.</i></p>
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<p><b>CM3 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Munkonge – Play Park for Broad Street</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>What is the city council’s view of the idea of a play park in the centre of Broad Street if and when plans are designed to improve the city centre?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Space is a key constraint in the city centre. The high footfall and variety of uses all competing for this limited and constrained space in a historic setting poses many challenges.</p> <p>Broad Street is a highway and therefore comes under the jurisdiction of Oxfordshire County Council. We delivered an initial experimental scheme, known as Broad Meadow, in 2021. The current scheme is a county council led scheme.</p> <p>In designing those schemes careful balances had to be struck between access for Turl Street, deliveries for businesses along the street, Public Transport and disabled parking. The street also hosts many events during the year the most significant being the Oxford Half Marathon and Christmas markets. During St. Giles Fair the street also has to have wider access arrangements accommodated.</p> <p>Due to the above it would not be possible to safely introduce a permanent play park.</p> <p>The city and county councils will be working with stakeholders soon to look at longer term solutions for the street as part of a wider framework for the city centre. A key element of this is to try and identify opportunities for re-prioritisation of road space across the city centre to enable more civic space where people can dwell for longer. Play whether formal or informal is likely to feature in that thinking around public realm design.</p>

<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Providing a welcoming city centre space for children is important to become a child-friendly city and promote child rights and wellbeing in line with the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, which sets out the principle that governments respect, protect and fulfil the right to play of all children. It also brings commercial benefits so that people with children will see it as a welcoming destination to spend their money and time. With this in mind, since there are no children's public play areas within one kilometre of Broad Street, as you engage with the County Council on opportunities to reprioritise the rates based in Broad Street, will you be requesting that a children's play area is included in the design options for the public realm improvement? And secondly, will you be advocating that they take meaningful engagement with children in the redesign?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>As you mentioned, that is the responsibility of the County Council. But, of course, we will work in partnership to try and find the resolution for this.</i></p>
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<p><b>CM4 From Cllr Smith to Cllr Munkonge – St Andrew’s School use of Ferry pool</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>St Andrew’s School has hired a Thursday morning slot at Ferry pool for over 25 years. This year the application went to Fusion online and a hard copy delivered in person. The school was informed the day before the children's first swimming lesson of the year that the slot had been given to another school. Does the cabinet member have confidence in Fusion?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Due to an administration issue on Fusion's part, unfortunately the booking was not registered. Fusion have apologised to St Andrews school and a solution has now been found where the school will swim at the Leys pool from 09:30-10:30 on Thursday mornings.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Thank you for your response however I don’t feel I have had the question answered. Does the Cabinet Member have confidence in Fusion?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>As you know, we are in the process of looking at future provision, I’m afraid I cannot answer that question.</i></p>

<p><b>CM5 From Cllr Smith to Cllr Munkonge – City allotment associations rent rises</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p>

<p>I understand in the proposed terms of new leases to the City allotment associations for block rents is a whopping 29.5% rise with a link to inflation pressure rises thereafter. This is addition to changes in responsibilities for the associations. Does the leader consider these changes and rent increases justified and fair?</p>	<p>It is correct that an increase in rents is proposed. For context this will increase the global rent, across all allotment sites from £11,700 pa to £15,237.23 pa. The rents have not been reviewed in 9 years and so this represents a 3.3% increase per year. The rent is not taken as income by the Council but is instead made available to Associations by way of Grant to help facilitate investment in the sites. The Federation of Associations considers grant applications twice per year. The rents are also discounted for those sites that do experience regular flooding events which may mean part of the site is not useable during an event.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>You've mentioned the size of the increase for the rents and put it down to a 3.3% increase over nine years and yet we have no inflation, or certainly less than 0.1% for many of those nine years. In fact, I still believe that the 29.5% rise, which is being proposed, with furthering pressure inflation rises thereafter on these associations is not justified and I'm surprised that you think is. If you looked at the inflation rates and so forth, I think a more fair and justified rise in rates would be a 10% or even 11% for these associations. Does the Cabinet member agree with me?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>We are still in negotiations. We are one of the more lenient Councils that charge the lowest rents. I do take into consideration what you have said. Apart from being lenient, our rents go back to the development associations.</i></p>

<p><b>CM6 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Munkonge – Usage data on public water fountains</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Does the council have usage data on public water fountains in the city? What are the costs of maintenance for them?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The council has drinking water fountains in Florence Park, Cutteslowe Park, and Bury Knowle Park. We have no data on usage of these, or on city-wide drinking fountains usage. So far repairs have been low level and are not recorded individually.</p>

<p><b>CM7 From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Munkonge – Installation of an outdoor public chess board</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Is the city council seeking to access Chess Federation funds for the installation of an</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Unfortunately, the City Council isn't eligible to access these funds. Only Local authorities</p>



<p>outdoor chess public chess board in Oxford?</p>	<p>which are currently receiving the Levelling Up Parks Fund (LUPF) and have been identified as communities most in need of improved quality green space will determine where to locate the chess tables and Oxford City Council is not in that category. See <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-investment-to-transform-future-of-english-chess-announced">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-investment-to-transform-future-of-english-chess-announced</a></p>
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<b>CM8 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Munkonge – Local food production as an essential service</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Will the Council consider making local food production an essential service by dedicating adequate and substantial officer time into supporting and helping manage communal food growing projects in Oxford? This needs to have far greater priority if we are to provide greater food security and more sustainable farming practices in a more uncertain, less reliable future life for the citizens of Oxford.</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>We recognise the importance of local food production and local food growing projects. In respect of this we have been working with the County Council, District Councils, Good Food Oxfordshire and local groups on the Oxfordshire Food Strategy and also the City Food Action Plan. This promotes a system wide response to these issues rather than focusing on any one organisation given the scale of the problem.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>I'm pleased that everyone is working in collaboration to tackle this immense problem. Do you know when the results of this collaboration will be published?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>We have just started the second round of negotiations so I cannot give the timeline at this point.</i></p>

<b>CM9 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Munkonge – Allotment leases</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Given that allotments are the backbone of local food production, does the portfolio holder agree that the City Council should make it easier for leases to be renewed?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>A template lease is being negotiated with ODFAA on behalf of each association, these discussions are ongoing. Once this is complete each association will receive a copy of their new lease. It has been undertaken in this way at the request of the Associations and ODFAA and to avoid having 30 differing lease types across the allotment portfolio.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>As I understand, the leases for allotments associations were due to be renewed in 2021</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>As I alluded to earlier, we have started the second round of negotiations and the</i></p>

<p><i>and that the City Council wanting to increase rents by 25%. You're trying to hand over a responsibility of the care, maintenance, and repair of allotment perimeter fences to allotment associations. This is clearly unreasonable given the scale of such a job in terms of time, expertise and costs. I just wonder whether that is viable, sustainable, or fair?</i></p>	<p><i>meetings will be happening soon that will facilitate those discussions. I will have to look at what the ODFAA are proposing as well as what our officers say.</i></p>
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<p><b>CM10 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Munkonge – Allotment maintenance</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Does the portfolio holder agree that the city council has an obligation to maintain allotments, rather than putting extra responsibilities onto voluntary organisations with limited resources?</p>	<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Does the portfolio holder agree that the city council has an obligation to maintain allotments, rather than putting extra responsibilities onto voluntary organisations with limited resources?</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>It seems to imply that there's continuation of existing position with the leases and there's not a change in obligation. Am I mistaken in thinking that allotment associations are already obligated to repair and maintain their perimeter fences? It seems a bit unreasonable given that most associations are run by volunteers with very limited budgets.</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>First of all, let me assure you that me and my colleagues are keen to have this concluded as soon as possible. The negotiations have reached an impasse and we have to understand as to why. Our offices have explained in detail what needs to be done, and we have also listened to what the ODFAA is saying. As I have said previously, we have started the second round of negotiations as an outcome of the progress meetings. We are looking to have a short 'second chance' negotiation on this.</i></p>

**Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities**

<p><b>LU1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – OxIS multi criteria assessment tool</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>OxIS multicriteria assessment toolkit is promoted across Oxfordshire for prioritising infrastructure spend; does the city council</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The City Council is working with our County and District partners on the OxIS project and we're familiar with the multicriteria</p>

<b>LU1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – OxIS multi criteria assessment tool</b>	
use this tool and when was the last time it was used?	assessment toolkit which was developed as part of the work on OxIS. It was developed for assessing and prioritising large infrastructure projects within the OxIS report itself. Several key infrastructure projects for the city scored well such as the station improvements and work to enable the reintroduction of passenger services on the Cowley Branch Line, and have been prioritised in OxIS accordingly. The next phase of OxIS will involve ensuring the toolkit performs well, and if so, assessing new projects with it. The City Council itself doesn't regularly commission such projects, but is keen to ensure that key infrastructure projects that will benefit the city are prioritised.

<b>LU2 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Upton – Planning Enforcement</b>	
<b>Question</b> I note that the Council's good work to enforce against material change of use from a C3 dwellinghouse to a full-time short let is stymied by a significantly under-resourced planning enforcement operation. Will you commit to securing the additional person-hours needed to clear the backlog?	<b>Written Response</b> The enforcement team work diligently and effectively across all manner of planning enforcement issues, and your positive comments regarding their work is welcome. As with all service areas we must balance the caseload with delivering a prudent and balanced budget. There are no current intentions to increase the number of Enforcement Officers but we will continue to prioritise the most urgent and egregious cases.

<b>LU3 From Cllr Landell Mills to Cllr Upton – B4044 cycle path to Hill End and Eynsham</b>	
<b>Question</b> What is the city council's position on the proposal for a segregated cycle way on the B4044 to connect Oxford to Eynsham but also to allow visitors to the Hill End Activity Centre used by schools in the city to travel	<b>Written Response</b> This B4044, connecting Oxford to Eynsham, was found to be a strategic or primary route in the County Council's recently completed project, the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN). This means it is one of the priority

<p>there safely by bike?</p>	<p>routes which should be put forward for development as a scheme for potential delivery.</p> <p>The council agrees with the finding of the SATN – this is not a pleasant or safe road for cycling on and it would benefit many people, including journeys by young people to the Hill End Activity Centre, if there were a segregated cycle way here.</p>
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### Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services

<p><b>NC1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman – Men’s toilets outside Town Hall</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>What are the plans and timescales for addressing the boarded up gentlemen’s toilets on the outside of the town hall, and where were the original women’s public toilets?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Following on from the successful move from St Aldates Chambers to the town hall, capital feasibility funds have been allocated to look at the potential scope of further work at the town hall, including the closed toilets on Blue Boar Street. This work will consider the business case for further investment to improve the asset</p> <p>Officers expect this next phase of scoping work to complete by July 2024, at which point it will be reported to me for consideration, ahead of future budget and capital programme planning.</p> <p>The original women’s toilets are further up Blue Boar Street and were accessed via a door at street level.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>When you refer to the fact that this work is going to consider the business case for further investment to improve the assets, does that mean refurbishing the public toilet so there’s additional toilet capacity for the general public; or does that mean</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>If that was found to be impractical, I wouldn't rule out using that space for something else but not for that sort of primary purpose.</i></p>

<p><i>repurposing them for alternative purposes? And if so, what purposes are being considered? Thank you.</i></p>	
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<p><b>NC2 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Chapman – Annual flytipping</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Headington has experienced an annual wave of fly-tipping relating to turnover of predominantly student lets. Is responding to these with case-by-case street scene visits cost-effective? Will you look at providing an extraordinary waste bulk collection given we know this will happen next August/September?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>ODS does not hold specific data on fly tips in the Headington area related to students. However, ODS is working with Oxford Brookes to ensure guidance is given to students around house clear-outs at the end of the academic year and is planning to hold discussions with property managing agents.</p> <p>For a number of years ODS has also been working with the British Heart Foundation, to provide sites around the Headington area for temporary bring banks to collect clothing around the end of the academic year.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>You mentioned giving guidance to students about how to dispose of bulky waste at the end of a tenancy. Does that guidance offer them an option beyond either getting their stuff to Redbridge or paying for bulky waste collection? We know that the net result each year tends to be a lot of stuff just abandoned on pavements. Is it really cost effective to just let that happen rather than laying on some sort of extraordinary waste collection for that purpose?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>It's a matter of balancing out various things. I think we have to take a pragmatic attitude towards this. Obviously, we do not encourage fly-tipping. It costs more to pick up individual fly-tipped waste. To have a cohesive, coherent attack on the problem would be my core response to your question.</i></p>

<p><b>NC3 From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Chapman – Grass verge cutting policy</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Has it been worth having a once-per-year grass verge cutting policy and what would the council change about the current policy based on resident feedback?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Over the past three years Oxford City Council has trialled allowing grass to grow long in 21 specific locations across the city to help boost biodiversity. This year Oxfordshire County Council, the highways authority, which has responsibility for roadside verges across Oxfordshire, announced a single mow policy countywide and confirmed it would</p>

	<p>only pay ODS for one annual mow. As a result, this year there was a single cut across the entire city. Additional mowing has been undertaken at junctions to ensure safety.</p> <p>There has been significant resident feedback on the change in the verge cutting regime. We are now reviewing that feedback and also assessing the measurable changes in biodiversity achieved at different sites across the city. As cuttings are left in place following the single cut – other than in one of the 21 trial locations to boost biodiversity – we are also assessing the impact the greater volume of cuttings detritus has had on street cleaning costs.</p> <p>Following the review and assessment we will consider adjustments to the mowing regime as appropriate.</p> <p>OCC &amp; ODS are working through areas of Oxford, where taking resident views, safety, biodiversity and costs into account we could trial different frequencies in different areas of the City, to find the appropriate way of maintaining our verges. This is very much work in process currently.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Thanks very much for the detailed response. Cabinet Member refers to a review and assessment as to how things are going to go next year. When can we expect to learn the results of said review and assessment? And what opportunities are there to contribute information to that process.</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>In terms of timescales, that is already underway. We are also going into Autumn/Winter now where we won't be needing any grass verge cutting and we will use this time to get this right and look at all the issues. What is disappointing, however, is that the County does not look like it will be able to fund any more grass verge cutting than we currently have. If there were to be any more, that's in the view of the Council as a whole and it will have to come through a budget bid.</i></p>

<b>NC4 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman – Deep cleaning of streets</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>

<p>Outside of the city centre what criteria are applied to determine if and when certain streets are given a deep clean, for example is data on intensity of pedestrian use on specific streets used?</p>	<p>There is no specific criteria to deep cleansing, the work is normally generated through 3 streams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following Supervisor inspections</li> <li>• Resident feedback</li> <li>• Known historic hot spots</li> </ul> <p>We have 4 Suburban streetscene Supervisors, who look after different areas of the City, and regularly inspect cleansing and complaints</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>How many deep cleans have been undertaken outside the immediate city centre over the last year? Is there a need for a deep clean resulting from poor waste management of specific premises (for instance, an HMO or business) and whether or not any fines are routinely levied or could be levied to cover the cost to the Council?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>I'm very happy to come back to you with answers both for extensive deep cleaning and whether we would take enforceable action, in principle, against anybody causing pollution.</i></p> <p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>In response to the question about how many deep cleans, we don't have specific data – however we estimate at least 150 occasions a year when we do deep cleans. The team is normally deployed in other aspects of the service but will respond to deep cleaning as part of a schedule, moving around the city. This largely comprises of streets work such as cleaning gulleys, back edges, alleyways, assisting with leaf clearance but also when needed underpasses and garage areas.</i></p> <p><i>The Council can only charge landlords/business owners/residents if a “clean” was required by a legal notice which the landlord/business owner/resident did not comply with i.e., if the Council carry out the works in default. Some notices do cover issues on public land if it is not highways land maintainable at public expense. As a legal notice is served landlords and business owners have the right to appeal to the Courts about the service of the notice or the charges levied for undertaking the works in default.</i></p>

<p><b>NC5 From Cllr Landell Mills to Cllr Chapman – Public realm in Cornmarket</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p>

<p>What is the council's view on the state of the public realm in Cornmarket and other city centre streets after 7pm? What advice is given to businesses about where they should place their commercial waste on the street after their businesses close?</p>	<p>Businesses presenting trade waste for collection does have an impact on the city centre in the evenings. Oxford City Council and ODS are working to help minimise the impact on the public realm. Where possible businesses should present commercial waste in the morning. ODS would be happy to work with any businesses, that have timing issues with this, to advise on best practice and solutions</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>Are there any plans afoot to do anything with local businesses as it is an eyesore and detracts from the beauty of the city centre?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>As this is a commercial matter, the only way we can do more is if the businesses are prepared to pay for more waste collection as they currently do. Given the cost-of-living crisis and the pressure on businesses, I would be surprised if they wanted to. I think we could continue to encourage them to put their wastes out for the minimum length of time. The notion that businesses put their wastes out in the morning is unrealistic as most of these businesses are not open at that time and I think that is just a fact of life.</i></p>

<p><b>NC6 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Chapman – Grass Cutting around Marston</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>In view of the still uncut grass verges around Marston in September, what actions is the Council taking to make sure next year is better organised and that the cuttings are collected and composted before the end of August?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Over the past three years Oxford City Council has trialled allowing grass to grow long in 21 specific locations across the city - including Marston Road, Marsh Lane and Marston Ferry Road - to help boost biodiversity. This year Oxfordshire County Council, the highways authority, which has responsibility for roadside verges across Oxfordshire, announced a single mow policy across the county and confirmed it would only pay ODS for one annual mow. As a result, this year there was a single cut across the entire city for roadside verges.</p> <p>Mowing in Marston has taken place between 18<sup>th</sup> and 22nd September, as planned. Cuttings are collected and composted in those roads that remain part of the biodiversity trial, elsewhere cuttings are left</p>



	<p>to mulch in.</p> <p>We are now assessing the impact of the single cut approach - both in terms of the significant level of feedback from residents as well as measurable changes in biodiversity. Following the assessment we will consider adjustments to the mowing regime as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>With this new grass cutting regime, can you confirm that we have the necessary equipment in place to cut and collect those areas that are deemed suitable for biodiversity improvement. And do you have sufficient storage capacity to store the cuttings? And if there are problems with budget, will the Council consider allowing residents to manage their own grass verges?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>There are a number of verges in the city where, for very good biodiversity reasons, we are leaving the grass long; when we do eventually cut them, the grass cuttings are taken away to encourage that biodiversity to flourish. In other verges, there is not much biodiversity around and therefore we leave the grass cuttings there. When the review is complete and all details are clear, we will have to make a judgement as to how many verges will remain under the biodiversity umbrella and how many, on balance, will not contribute very much, and what we will do about them. I am confident we have the equipment to deal with that balance as that is what we are doing now.</i></p>

## Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice

<b>AR1 From Cllr Pegg to Cllr Railton – Tree planting</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>How many trees are being planted in the upcoming tree planting season and, of these trees, how many are replacing trees which have been removed? Given Oxfordshire County Council's recent announcement of a £2.1m fund to replace lost street trees, do we have allocated County funds to assist with tree planting?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>74 trees are due to be planted by ODS on Council land in the upcoming tree planting season.</p> <p>Where trees are identified for removal by ODS on behalf of the City Council, then our aim is to replace them at the same site where appropriate – though this may not be in exactly the same position. Any replacement planting will be undertaken between November and March and</p>

	<p>according to our 5-year tree planting schedule (attached separately).</p> <p>If Members would like to invest in local tree planting in your area sooner using your ward budget, please contact ODS and they can provide a quotation.</p> <p>In addition, Oxfordshire County Council has informed us that it intends to remove 53 trees along Oxford highways this winter, which are approaching the end of their safe life. County officers have committed that two street trees will be planted for each tree removed – the first, wherever possible, within the tree pit of the felled tree; the second in other empty tree pits across the city. The Council’s adopted Urban Forest Strategy provides clear criteria to prioritise where these additional street trees should be sited – in those areas of the city with lower levels of existing canopy.</p>
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**Cabinet Member for Culture and Events**

<b>JH1 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Hunt – Enforcement of single use plastic for street trading</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Written Response</b>
<p>What is the latest enforcement data regarding the continued use of single use plastic for street trading by street traders in contravention of the street trading policy?</p>	<p>Following update report agenda item 4 at the General Purposes Licensing Committee 25/09/23, As reported to Council in July, steps have been taken to ensure that street traders are no longer using single use plastic, in line with the updated Policy. Inspection visits to 90% of street traders found that 25% of these were still using single use plastic. All respective Consent Holders were advised that they were breaching a condition of the Policy and it is intended that follow-up visits will be carried out in October this year. This work will continue in October following the issuing of 100 Pavement License</p>

	consents.
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>With respect to enforcement of the single use plastic for street trading, congratulations to the Council for its leading practice in plugging the hole in national policy which came enforced this week. Can you clarify what are the steps in place to ensure that pavement licence holders will be following the national guidance on single use plastics? And, is there any ways for us to close any gaps in the national legislation through amending our pavement licensing condition?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>Thank you for making those very important points. I propose that we accompany the Officers when they go out for inspections in October in order to brainstorm and put our heads together on this.</i></p> <p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>The regulations allow Oxfordshire County Council trading standards the use of powers of enforcement under the primary legislation: The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) Regulations 2023 which would cover the whole premises. The current legislation does not provide for the ability to amend pavement License requirements, it is solely confined to the use of street furniture on the highway.</i></p>

<b>JH2 From Cllr Miles to Cllr Hunt – Helium balloons at St Giles Fair</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Street traders were selling Helium Balloons at St Giles Fair. What action was taken to inform the organisers of St Giles Fair about the updated street trading policy?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The event is outside the scope of The Street Trading Policy which states in section 4.3- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, this is an exempt activity.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>What steps can be taken to ensure that traders at fairs are subjected to the same standards as street trader licence holder in relation to the use of single use plastics and helium balloons as there seems to be inconsistencies? What can be done?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>I agree that we need clarification on this. I was advised by Licensing Officers that this was a matter for the Thames Valley Police. Again, we need to understand where our Licensing Officers fit in.</i></p> <p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>Fairs are exempt from the policy and as such would not be subject to such standards under the street trading policy. A pedlar's certificate allows for mobile selling of products and are authorized by their local police authority. The ban on the use of single-use plastics, including balloon sticks, is covered by the regulations The</i></p>

	<p><i>Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) Regulations 2023 that allow Oxfordshire County Council trading standards the use of powers of enforcement.</i></p>
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**Cabinet Member for Housing**

<p><b>LS1 From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Smith– HMOs not compliant with current standards</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Where a licensed HMO is not compliant with current standards (e.g., not having proper bin storage), but is licensed on grounds of use predating the licensing scheme, what can be done to compel the landlord to bring the property up to standard over time?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>There is a mandatory condition which makes it clear that the landlord is responsible for the provision of waste receptacles at the start of the tenancy and for dealing with problems during or at the end of the tenancy, and that tenants are also responsible during tenancy. If a property has an HMO licence, a lack of bin storage can be addressed at any time, through the use of enforcement of the licence condition or other relevant legislation. If there are particular HMOs of concern please refer them to HMO Enforcement team who will investigate the issue – <a href="mailto:hmos@oxford.gov.uk">hmos@oxford.gov.uk</a></p>

<p><b>LS2 From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Smith – HMO Licenses</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Can the portfolio holder confirm whether licenses for HMOs and other private rented properties contain clauses surrounding anti-social behaviour, and, if so, what proportion of licensed properties have them?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Following the consultation exercise carried out in 2020 regarding both the HMO licensing scheme renewal and the proposed Selective licensing scheme; standard conditions concerning anti – social behaviour are not included in either HMO or selective licences. However, where there are particular problems evidenced at a particular property, a specific property condition is included in the licence.</p>

	<p>The number of properties where a specific condition to ASB has been included in a licence is not retrievable from the HMO licensing database; however I can confirm that we have added an ASB condition to only 1 or 2 licences recently, and none have as yet been added to a selective licence. It is hoped that using PowerBI we will be able to get information concerning details of specific conditions from the database in the future.</p> <p>There are currently 3037 HMOs with an HMO licence and 4 of these have a specific condition relating to ASB. Specific ASB conditions have not, as yet, been added to a selective licence.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p><i>There appears to be two contradictory statements in the written response with regards to properties with specific ASB conditions: 'the number of properties where a specific condition to ASB has been included in a licence is not retrievable from the HMO licensing database' and 'there are currently 3037 HMOs with an HMO licence and 4 of these have a specific condition relating to ASB'. Please can you clarify which of these statements is true?</i></p> <p><i>What happens in practice when an ASB condition is added to HMO licence?</i></p> <p><i>What is the threshold for 'particular problems being evidenced at a particular property' for it to have ASB conditions against the licence?</i></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p><i>The contradiction is because the first statement was part of the first draft of the answer where it was thought that this detail was not retrievable. The second statement is correct.</i></p> <p><b>Written Response Provided</b></p> <p><i>There are currently 3037 HMOs with an HMO licence and 4 of these have a specific condition relating to ASB.</i></p> <p><i>In practice, an ASB licence condition can contain the following requirements for the Licence Holder:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>to cooperate with the relevant agencies who are trying to reduce ASB from occupants or visitors to the property;</i></li> <li>• <i>to ensure that occupancy agreements have sufficient terms and conditions in them to require occupants to behave and conduct themselves in a manner that does not disturb the quiet enjoyment of neighbours;</i></li> <li>• <i>to take all reasonable steps to enforce the conditions in the occupancy agreements.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>ASB licence conditions are normally added to property licences when complaints have</i></p>

	<i>been received by the ASB teams. This is to assist them in their investigations into ASB issues originating from the property.</i>
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<b>LS3 From Cllr Morris to Cllr Smith – Cooperative housing projects</b>	
<b>Question</b> Is the Council willing to work towards ensuring that future housing developments all include at least one co housing project? There is a demand and need for this sort of cooperative living arrangement in the way we live as a very real and practical way of living more sustainably and with better mental wellness.	<b>Written Response</b> No. Our priority remains the provision of affordable housing, to include homes for social rent, homes for affordable rent and shared ownership homes.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> <i>Do you not think it would be cheaper to rent or buy housing if some facilities were shared in some properties? Surely, some of these could be shared facilities. After all, we talk about shared ownership. How about shared living?</i>	<b>Verbal Response</b> <i>Our priority is social housing and the hundreds of households that are on the housing register who bid for Council properties or housing association properties, and who are allocated those properties according to their needs. We have a very detailed allocations policy to assess that need and people are banded accordingly. That is how we prioritise and allocate housing.  What people do and how they make their own arrangements, and whether they would like to live communally is their business. In terms of this Council, we follow the criteria set out in the allocations policy.</i>