

To: Council
Date: 15 July 2024
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 Partnership Working; Leader of the Council

SB1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown – Vision Zero Commitment

Question

Does this council formally commit to partnership working on Vision Zero in Oxford to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on our roads, in line with the county council's ambition to reduce deaths and serious injuries on

Written Response

The Council has been engaged on partnership working in support of Vision Zero for some time. Last year [Cabinet approved the CLOCS \(Construction, Logistics and Community Safety\) Standard](#) for construction vehicles. This

Oxfordshire's roads to zero by 2050?	requires developers of large construction sites to plan the movement of their HGVs to keep them away from busy or high-risk areas, such as school gates during drop-off times, as well as setting minimum safety standards for their fleet. This is currently waiting for further input from the County Council.
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Thank you for explaining the partnership work that is already happening on Vision Zero. My understanding is that we as a City Council are committed to Vision Zero. Can you state in one word, does the council formally commit to partnership work on Vision Zero to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on our roads, yes or no?</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>Yes, we are waiting on the county council to come back to us in order to progress this matter.</i></p>

SB2: From Cllr Sandelson to Cllr Brown – Peace Initiative	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can we invite both Hamze Awarde and Magen Inon from 'Together for Humanity' and Talking Peace to speak to Council about their thoughts on how to effect a lasting peace in Israel and Gaza?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>I support anyone who is working for peace which is why we hosted a "Together for Humanity" event at the Town Hall in January this year which saw hundreds of people from all faiths and none come together to build unity and call for peace. We continue to engage with our Faith, Community and Civic leaders, most recently through the interfaith walk last month. I don't see how asking Mr Awarde and Mr Inon to speak to Oxford City Council about their views on this will influence those who can effect the resolution of the conflict in Israel and Gaza.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>We want to continue engaging in peaceful talks and understanding across all divides. Given that in previous Council meetings we have had representatives both from the Palestinian community and British doctors coming to speak with us,</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>I understand where this is coming from, and of course we absolutely share the concerns and the desire for peace. We are not convinced that a Council meeting is the right forum for this matter. Having a public meeting to hear these two people</i></p>

<p><i>is it not possible to have two people who work closely together and are indeed good friends and travel together around the world, speaking together in the name of peace?</i></p>	<p><i>Speak would be incredibly interesting, and I'm sure it would be something that we could all welcome. However, three minutes at the start of a Council meeting, which is all we have granted to anybody else to speak on these issues, does not feel that it would be sufficient. And, if we were to make a much longer period than that, then we would be eating into Council business time, and potentially making a very long meeting of it. So, I just do not think that this is the right forum for this type of proposal, but I do think that your proposal for a public meeting is something that we could offer support to.</i></p>
---	--

<p>SB3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Brown – Action plan for reduction in Child Poverty</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The paper on voluntary adaption of the socio-economic duty was agreed at cabinet in March 2024 after the Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of child poverty and this council agreed a motion to take steps to try and reduce the number of children living in poverty in our city. What is the timeline for the publication of the detailed implementation and action plan?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Cabinet committed to full implementation of the socio-economic duty (SED) within the 2024/25 Council year, and this is on track.</p> <p>While officers are still finalising the comprehensive Action Plan, individual actions, initiatives, and programmes are already delivering a commitment towards the SED. This is because the Council's strategic approach to policy already had significant regard to promoting inclusion and tackling economic inequalities; and because the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process is already in place.</p>

<p>SB4: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Brown – Motion on Four Day Work Week</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>In March 2023, this council passed a motion on the Four Day Week. That motion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requested that the Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive 	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As Council will be aware, the previous Conservative government made it clear that it would take steps to prevent other councils adopting a 4 day week. As I said in response to a previous question</p>

<p>Economy and Partnerships continues to discuss with the LEP (of which she is a director) and with South Cambridgeshire District Council (whose leader she meets with regularly) any relevant learnings from their involvement in running the four-day week trial.</p> <p>2. Requested that the Leader as part of her work on the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP) finds out if there are any other employers in Oxford considering trialling a four-day week for their own employees, particularly any with a large directly employed customer service workforce.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder update us as to how the conversation has moved forwards with South Cambridgeshire council who have implemented this full-time, how the trial is working for OxLEP, and any other relevant updates from conversations that have been had?</p>	<p>on this matter, I believe this should be a matter for councils to decide dependent on their individual circumstances.</p> <p>As was reported in the press earlier this month, the pilot in South Cambs has had positive results in terms of productivity, and retention and recruitment of staff. OxLEP has extended its pilot scheme until September 2024 to gain a further understanding as to how effective the working arrangement is for staff and its stakeholders.</p> <p>I am not aware of any other major employers currently exploring this in Oxfordshire.</p>
--	--

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

<p>ET1: From Cllr Malik to Cllr Turner – Incentives to Westgate businesses</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Has John Lewis and other businesses been given business rates free or reduced to encourage them to stay at the Westgate shopping centre?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>No reductions in business rates have been given to John Lewis or other businesses at the Westgate, and so far as I am aware none have been applied for. There are policies in place to govern both nationally-mandated and local business rate reductions and any applications would be determined in line with those. Decisions on business rates are not made by this authority but by the Valuations Office Agency.</p>

ET2: From Cllr Jarvis to Cllr Turner – Lobbying efforts to end austerity policies impacting local governments

Question

Can the portfolio holder outline whether plans are in place to lobby the new government - particularly the Secretary of State for Leveling Up, Housing and Communities - to deliver long term financial sustainability for local authorities - including Oxford City Council - and to bring an end to the more than a decade of austerity local government has faced since 2010?

Written Response

Yes, plans are in place to lobby the incoming Government on a range of matters of critical importance to Oxford and other councils. These include the need for a more sustainable basis for funding the delivery of new affordable housing into the future, more support to meet the rising costs of temporary accommodation provision, the need for better alignment of the national planning policy framework and building standards with net zero delivery, support for council housing, and the significant economic growth that targeted infrastructure investment in Oxford can help unlock.

I would encourage Cllr Jarvis to bear in mind the enormous scale of the challenges that the new government faces, as a result of the legacy of the contemptuous treatment of local government by successive Conservative-led administrations, and very poor economic decision-making.

Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford; Deputy Leader of the Council

AR1: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Pollution levels inside the ZEZ expansion zone

Question

As a prelude to considering ZEZ expansion, will council now share best practice to include a thorough analysis of current pollution levels inside the (trail) ZEZ expansion zone.

Written Response

Oxford City Council is a local authority with probably the most extensive air quality monitoring network within its jurisdiction. We currently monitor air quality levels at almost 130 locations across the city.

The locations where currently NO2 levels are being monitored can also be found in

	<p>our new AQ website OXONAIR: https://www.oxonair.uk/, and they cover all the areas where ZEZ is expected to expand</p> <p>Oxford City Council has the statutory duty (given by Env Protection Act 1995) of reporting on an annual basis on the status of air pollution in the city every year in June. Air Quality levels (including the ones at the sites covered by the ZEZ expansion) will continue to be reported on an annual basis, as part of this statutory duty and the air pollution levels will also continue to be uploaded onto the new OXONair website.</p> <p>Oxford City Council will also continue to provide support to Oxfordshire County Council on the assessment of the specific air quality impacts of any current and future transport schemes delivered.</p>
--	---

AR2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – City Council’s NO2 targets	
Question	Written Response
<p>Does the city council still subscribe to the "local annual mean NO2 target of 30 µg/m3 by 2025 (30 by 25) - or has it now shifted to an ambitious target?</p>	<p>As far as we are aware, Oxford City Council is the only UK local authority in the country to set its own local annual mean Target of NO2 -30ug/m3 - one that is much more stringent than the current UK annual mean legal target of 40ug/m3.</p> <p>In its Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2021-2025 the Council has committed to achieve this target across the city by December 2025, and is on track to do so.</p> <p>A new AQAP will need to be prepared in 2025 with a fresh set of air quality measures which will need to be agreed between the Council and its partners, to continue to reduce air pollution levels in the city for the new period 2026-2030.</p> <p>Any future decision on a potential new local annual mean NO2 target for the city will form part of this process.</p>

AR3: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Income and expenditure from the ZEZ expansion

Question

How much annual income, and expenditure, (separately) does the city council anticipate generating / spending from the zez expansion each year, until 2030, as part of its planned agreement with Oxfordshire County Council?

Written Response

The planned Income sharing agreement that Cabinet approved in April 2024 is only applicable to the ZEZ PILOT and is only valid until the moment the ZEZ expansion is launched. Please refer to cabinet report for further clarifications on this matter :

[Link to report \(Item 153\)](#)

AR4: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton – Measures to reduce air pollution in the City Centre

Question

When the Botley Road reopens and the bus gates are installed, Botley Road will be the route most used for visitors driving to the Westgate Centre Car Park. After almost 2 years of cleaner air, the pollution around Botley Road at weekends is likely to be worse than ever. Would the council consider deploying some capacity to research the feasibility of introducing a compulsory pre booking system for city Centre car parks (with exemptions for Blue badge holders)?

Written Response

City Centre car park ownership includes the City Council (Gloucester Green), OxWED, Nuffield College, Network Rail, Westgate and the County Council (on street). A system is unlikely to be successful unless all parties agree to implement, it would require significant resource to undertake an initial assessment and likely significant ongoing resource to enforce. City Centre car parks managed and operated by the City Council will reduce in the coming years with the removal of Worcester Street and Oxpens as they come forward for development. Given the council's financial situation we would not be able to justify spending revenue funding to explore this on behalf of other car park owners. We would consider that the most appropriate body to explore this would be the County Council as part of considering supporting measures for their scheme.

Supplementary Question

Yes, thank you. Given our commitment to reducing air pollution and congestion in the city, I am surprised at your answer that we are not able to spare any resource to investigate the idea of a pre-booking system at some of our city

Verbal Response

To be clear, most of the car parks in the city centre do not belong to the City Council. Generally, this is a very substantial piece of work, but I'm not even sure how it would be done. We could not do this through our commercial

<p><i>centre car parks and whether that would help reduce congestion. Can I ask you to confirm that we really cannot give any resource to looking into this at all?</i></p>	<p><i>property team, because we do not own most of the car parks. I do not have much to add to this answer. Work of this nature does need to be resourced, but to resource this, we would have to choose to not do something else. I stand by my written response to this question.</i></p>
---	---

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

NC1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman - Cornmarket waste rubbish

<p>Question</p> <p>What timings does the council stipulate businesses on Cornmarket are allowed to put out their rubbish for waste collection and what are the requirements as to where they place this to ensure the pavement is not blocked for pedestrians in the evenings? What actions has the council taken to enforce the correct timings and location of waste to be removed from businesses on cornmarket in the late evenings/ early mornings?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Businesses and organisations are able to place their waste for collection after 18:00 hours. This can be collected up to 10:00 hours in Cornmarket Street.</p> <p>There is no specific requirement as to where they exactly place their waste, but it is broadly in agreement with their waste collection provider. It is in practice normally placed in front of their business.</p> <p>Waste receptacles are not used on Cornmarket Street as waste bags once collected mean the street is clear, allowing free access for pedestrians and there are no bins left to cause problems or a security issue.</p> <p>Council officers visit businesses, advise on how to present waste in the correct bags or as recyclable side waste and issue legal notices for non-compliance.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Yes, thank you. I was shocked when I walked through Cornmarket after attending an event in the theatre in Oxford, to see the huge numbers of bin bags piled high outside all of the premises on Cornmarket. It really affects the public community of the space and the nighttime economy. Do we find it acceptable that these bin bags are piled</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>Most of the businesses close at 6 pm, so they've got to put their stuff out by that time. They can't put it out later, because they aren't open for business past that hour. Rubbish collection is then in the early hours of the morning, by ODS and other services. This takes place between 6 am and 8 – 8:30 am. I can explore whether or not they can collect the</i></p>

<p><i>high from 6 in the evening to the middle of the night, which can contribute to pest issues and is unsightly, so are you willing to work together to find options to ensure and improve the Public community space on Cornmarket, whilst managing some of the waste issues?</i></p>	<p><i>rubbish in the evening, but it is unlikely that it would be commercially viable for ODS or other providers to pick the bin bags up in the evening. It is unlikely that our providers for this service would be able to create a special round to pick up the rubbish in the evening, when they normally do it in the morning.</i></p>
--	---

<p>NC2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman - Waste management enforcement of city centre food retail businesses</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>What actions has the city council taken to work with city centre food retail shops, cafes and restaurants to reduce the amount of daily food packaging waste being placed in piles of bin bags on the city's pavements impacting the public amenity in the evenings, as well as impacting the environment?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As in response NC1, Council officers will visit premises if issues come to light about their waste management. We start by giving verbal advice and warnings, and then if they are ignored issue legal notices to how the waste is stored and presented.</p> <p>The Council served 51 Section 47 notices on businesses who do not present their waste in an appropriate way in Oxford between January 1st 2023 to date.</p> <p>With regard to the type of waste presented, the Council's Street Trading Policy has a licence condition for street traders which does not allow single use plastic packaging. The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) (England) Regulations 2023 are enforced by Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards. Should concerns about the use of single use plastic packaging by street traders arise, licensing officers will, in the first instance, refer complaints to the County's Trading Standards team.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Given the amount of waste being produced by some of these retail premises, I'm thinking of places such as the milkshake shops, how can we work with these vendors to reduce the sheer volume of waste that they are producing and that is impacting the public</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>There are measures available, as I said in my answer. There are obligations placed on businesses, which I have laid out in my written response. If there are concerns about the enforcement of those trading standards, then that is not our issue. That needs to be reported to the</i></p>

<i>community space of our city?</i>	<i>county council, because it is their job to police this matter. If you are aware of examples where you feel people are abusing their position around creation of, volume, type of waste, then I suggest you encourage the reporting of that to the County Council. It is their job to police the trading standards.</i>
-------------------------------------	---

Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and an Inclusive economy

AH1 - From Cllr Powell to Cllr Hollingworth – Damage to Southpark following the 2023 firework display	
<p>Question</p> <p>Following the damage caused to Southpark by the 2023 firework display, Council Leader Susan Brown said that there were ‘lessons to be learned’. Can the portfolio holder please advise on what lessons have been learned and how a repeat of the damage which we saw last November will be avoided?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Lessons have been learnt following the unfortunate situation that arose from the 2023 display. A core lesson relates to the event application process, which we have amended to include the compulsory submission of an inclement weather/cancellation plan for all event bookings.</p> <p>Cllr Hollingsworth retracted the response which had been published incorrectly and provided the following response verbally during the meeting</p> <p>The damage done to South Park as a result of the 2023 Round Table Fireworks display was unacceptable, and cannot be repeated. For any future events in South Park, the Council - working with Oxford Preservation Trust and the Friends of South Park - will require a clear cancellation protocol to be in place, with agreed deadlines by which events will be cancelled if the ground conditions are so poor that going ahead with an event will damage the Park.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Thank you for the updated answer, it is</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>There are proposals which are coming</i></p>

AH1 - From Cllr Powell to Cllr Hollingworth – Damage to Southpark following the 2023 firework display

reassuring to hear the seriousness with which the damage to the park is being taken. Regarding vehicle management plans on South park, last year, a large part of the damage seemed to be caused by vehicles driving up and down the park. What plans are there to ensure more effective vehicle management during any subsequent fireworks displays?

forward from the roundtable which will do two things. One, they will significantly reduce the area in which vehicles operate in south park. Two, we will use what are called tank tracks, which are those lightweight aluminium things, which people who go to festivals will be familiar with. These are being implemented instead of the rubber mat tracking, the new ones will make the grass go yellow, but will protect it, so that will be a significant improvement on what we had before. Those are proposals which are coming forward. The Council will need to discuss with the OPT and with the Friends of South Park, if that is an acceptable proposition. But to be clear, my intention is to achieve, as we have in the past, a fireworks display that people can enjoy without damage to the park. I do not think that those two things are incompatible.

Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford

CM1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Munkonge - Serco Leisure and group bookings (1)

Question

Are you satisfied with our new leisure contractor more than doubling the cost for groups to book out Barton Leisure Centre's pool?

Written Response

General fees and charges within the leisure contract must be approved by Council in line with the leisure contract.

There are 3 groups who were on historic agreements with the former operator for bookings of the whole pool, for charges outside of the general fees and charges framework and these were overdue for review.

The three groups have been consulted with to discuss their options and agree next steps. It is important that the leisure

	centres strike the right balance between concessions, fairness across all users and the future sustainability of the centre.
--	--

CM2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Munkonge - Serco Leisure and group bookings (2)	
Question Is there anything in our agreement with the new contractor restricting the maximum price for such group bookings, or the maximum price increase for existing bookings?	Written Response General fees and charges within the leisure contract must be approved by Council in line with the leisure contract. There are a few charges linked to whole facility hire that fall outside of this. We do, however, expect the operator to be reasonable and to discuss significant changes with us and to consult with users who might be impacted. Which to date has been happening.

CM3: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Munkonge - Serco Leisure and group bookings (3)	
Question Can you assure groups with existing regular pool sessions that you will intervene with the contractor to ensure they are able to continue at a reasonable cost?	Written Response We have regular communication with the operator and would expect them to discuss any significant changes with us in the first instance. If there are any particular sports clubs or community groups who are concerned about any proposed changes with fees and charges, we would urge them to talk to More Leisure in the first instance and the Council's Leisure services would similarly be happy to support groups with those conversations.
Supplementary Question <i>This revolves around the rates that have been charged for hiring pools. I note that in the schedule of fees and charges that we agreed with the contractor, we limited what they could charge for group bookings in other contexts, such as the hiring of a sports hall, but we did not in the schedule of fees and charges say anything about the group hire of a pool. It</i>	Verbal Response <i>This was not a deliberate oversight, if there is any particular group that is impacted, we would ask that they speak with us. We have been talking with one group that has been impacted, and we think they have been able to find a favourable conclusion. If there is another group that has been impacted, please have them speak to the relevant figures</i>

<p><i>appears that is a hole that has been found and that is how we are ending up with groups complaining that they are seeing the doubling or tripling of their costs. Was not restricting that bit a deliberate choice on our part, or was that merely an oversight?</i></p>	<p><i>and with us, so that we can consider this issue and make necessary recommendations.</i></p>
--	---

<p>CM4: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Munkonge - School swimming class size limits</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can you ensure that Serco understand that class sizes for school swimming in Oxford pools need to be matched to the actual class size rather than their arbitrary limit of 28? If the actual class size is higher (as most are) then the school will be unable to offer swimming as a class activity.</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>More Leisure are following national guidance from Swim England, on teacher to pupil ratios. However, we strongly believe that all pupils in the City should be able to leave primary school being able to swim 25 metres and agree that swimming lessons must be delivered to class actual sizes. This in practice means increasing the number of qualified teachers from 2 to 3. Unfortunately there is a national shortage of qualified swimming teachers across the country.</p> <p>There is also a requirement within Oxfordshire County Council's policy that states at least 2 trained staff members should be present during school swimming lessons, however this isn't always the case unfortunately in the City.</p> <p>However, to try and address this, and cut through some of the barriers particularly with busy schools, we have been working with More Leisure on a programme to actively seek to train additional swim teachers, More Leisure are also happy to offer some free training to school staff members and we are in the process of engaging schools around this.</p> <p>In the interim More Leisure have been trying to cover the necessary ratios where possible and where it has not been possible that in the interim they have been splitting school swimming classes into two 30 mins slots within an hour booking to enable all pupils to participate.</p>

CM5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Munkonge – Reductions in free swimming sessions

Question

A laudable aim stated within the thriving communities strategies has been to “reduce the number of children leaving primary school who cannot swim 25 meters from four to two in ten over the lifetime of this strategy”. Since the Serco takeover the children free swimming availability has been dramatically reduced. How will the aim be achieved when in the leys for example the free sessions weekday are now in the evening 6.30-7.30pm and ONLY in the small pool?

Written Response

Swimming is a key life skill and the council is working closely with More Leisure to support children and young people to swim competently. While the free under 17s swim offer has changed with the new operator, we have 25 sessions each week (totalling 34 hours a week) across our facilities. This offer includes weekend sessions at the Leys that happen in both pools.

We have the free swimming programme item as a regular item for discussion with More Leisure and we will review the usage at these sessions and also the community feedback to explore changes where necessary.

It is also noteworthy that it’s unusual for councils to offer free swimming and we’re proud to have maintained an accessible offer for the City.

Supplementary Question

There were some exceptions made to the rules about the changes to under 17 swimming, in discussions with a particular community group by contacts with one of the labour Councillors, which I welcome. However, I think this needs more thought and work, because the areas of deprivation and lack of access to swimming for cost reasons, for example in the Leys and the areas that we do have a real issue with health inequalities, I do think that there needs to be more availability of the under 17 free swimming, in hours that are accessible for parents. And I don’t think that it needs to be that if you look at the 34 that you’re talking about, if you look at the website, it is spread across the swimming pools, but actually, it is not as much an issue in the ferry swimming pool for example. So I do think this needs some more thinking if we

Verbal Response

We will have a think about this. When the change was made, we had thought that it would work, but actually it has created some problems. So we are going to review this, so that necessary changes can be made, as needed.

<p><i>are going to actually have some more of our children from the areas that are poorly served having access to swimming. Is it possible to have some more thought given to how we do that, because I do think that is a real change that is going to impact how many children actually get access to swimming, especially with the summer holidays coming up.</i></p>	
--	--

<p>CM6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Munkonge – Repair to Tumbling Bay Bathing space (1)</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The friends of Tumbling Bay addressed this council and were warmly received and encouraged to explore options to repair Tumbling Bay Bathing space with officers.</p> <p>Their preferred option is for the concrete wall to be replaced with steel piling, in keeping with other parts of the pool.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder explain the following:</p> <p>Why the council still intends to go ahead using gabion baskets to repair the wall?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The gabion basket design was determined as the most appropriate solution from the surveys that were carried out two years ago by the design team. After the continuous wet weather, officers have asked consultants to carry out a further structural survey. The inspection has found that degradation is worse than expected, partly due to the prolonged high river levels that have been experienced in recent months. Given this decline in condition, officers have requested a re-evaluation of options, including an option to incorporate Tumbling Bay Preservation Society’s desired option of sheet piling.</p>

<p>CM7: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Munkonge – Repair to Tumbling Bay Bathing space (2)</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The friends of Tumbling Bay addressed this council and were warmly received and encouraged to explore options to repair Tumbling Bay Bathing space with officers.</p> <p>Their preferred option is for the concrete wall to be replaced with steel piling, in keeping with other parts of the pool.</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As above, sheet piling is being considered as part of an updated options assessment.</p> <p>Considering this, officers will hold a drop-in session for the Tumbling Bay Preservation Society to discuss sheet piling and other potential areas where community fundraising may be welcome.</p>

<p>Can the portfolio holder explain the following:</p> <p>Why the council will not make a commitment to use Steel piling, so that the Friends of Tumbling Bay can confidently fundraise for the difference in costs?</p>	
--	--

<p>CM8: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Munkonge – Repair to Tumbling Bay Bathing space (3)</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The friends of Tumbling Bay addressed this council and were warmly received and encouraged to explore options to repair Tumbling Bay Bathing space with officers.</p> <p>Their preferred option is for the concrete wall to be replaced with steel piling, in keeping with other parts of the pool.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder explain the following:</p> <p>Why the council is planning to repair Longbridges with steel piling, yet still plans to repair Tumbling Bay with Gabion baskets?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The two sites in question have different needs for repair and reinstatement. These have been evaluated on an individual basis by a team of specialist engineers, who have provided the recommended solutions to the individual issues. Gabions were the most appropriate solution with the information previously available, and sheet piling will now also be considered as an option for Tumbling Bay.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Will the Cllr accept my thanks and that of the Tumbling Bay Preservation Society, for the change in looking at Tumbling Bay and how it is going to be.</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>Thank you.</i></p>

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

LS1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Smith - Community Centre Cost

<p>Question</p> <p>What is the annual recurrent cost to the Council of the Rose Hill Community Centre? Including staff costs at the Centre and within the Council?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Rose Hill Community Centre is a large complex facility that is operated by paid Council staff.</p> <p>The net spend/cost for 23/24 was £149k, this reduces next financial year to a target of £99k and a vision ultimately of breaking even.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Does she have an end date in vision in terms of a break even date for the Rose Hill community centre?</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>I do not have a date for that yet, but I am happy to write to you. A community review is going on at the moment and will be concluded towards the end of this year, and there will be decisions in the council budget, and I look forward to your support when it comes to that.</i></p>

<p>LS2: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Green Square run properties on Kingfisher Green</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of poor cleaning in Green square run properties on Kingfisher Green - this has been an ongoing issue despite multiple enquiries to the customer care team. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the partnership agreement or in the absence of that action as a rogue landlord?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.</p> <p>Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord’s complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if</p>

	<p>the complaint is upheld, including requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.</p> <p>Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council's Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Thank you for the answer. Our residents feel abandoned by the housing associations that we work in partnership with. They feel ignored and abandoned, because the processes we have outlined is very difficult to navigate. And for most people who are working multiple jobs and who've got caring responsibilities, it really is impossible to do that. We are working in partnership with the housing association and they've got more contracts with us, whilst the current residents are suffering in conditions that are really concerning. Could you please highlight what more the council could do to tackle this and the state of the current housing association homes that people are also sometimes paying a service charge for as well?</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>You are in a good position to assist the people in your ward. Tabling questions like this at council really is not the most efficient way to do your casework. We have set up the processes, if there are hazards in housing association homes, people should complain first to their landlord, then if that is not resolved, then the council has the residential regulation team here which has statutory powers, to demand the landlords including the housing association, to make improvements. That is the path you should suggest to your residents, or you should use it yourself to deal with those kind of issues. When it comes to things that are not hazards, such as cleanliness, housing associations are governed by the social housing regulator, the same way that we are as a landlord.</i></p>

	<p><i>That is where you should direct them to complain, and again, you would be well placed to help them or you might want to send them to one of our advice centres, in order to get assistance should they need it.</i></p>
--	---

<p>LS3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Peabody run flats in Acacia Avenue</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of damp and mould in Peabody run flats in Acacia Avenue - this has been an ongoing issue despite multiple enquiries to the customer care team. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the partnership agreement or in the absence of that action as a rogue landlord?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.</p> <p>Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord’s complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if the complaint is upheld, including requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.</p> <p>Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing</p>

	<p>Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council’s Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
--	--

<p>LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Green Square run flats in Jane Seaman Court</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of uncut grass and boarded up front door of flats in Green Square run Jane Seaman court - this has been an ongoing issue despite residents paying a maintenance charge. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the partnership agreement or in the absence of that action as a rogue landlord?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.</p> <p>Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord’s complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if the complaint is upheld, including</p>

	<p>requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.</p> <p>Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council's Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
--	---

<p>LS5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Peabody run property in Facon Close</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of mould in a Peabody run property in Facon Close - this has been an ongoing issue despite multiple enquiries to the customer care team. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the of the partnership agreement or in the absence</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.</p>

<p>of that action as a rogue landlord?</p>	<p>Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord's complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if the complaint is upheld, including requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.</p> <p>Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council's Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
--	---

<p>LS6: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Peabody run property on Celandine Place</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and</p>

lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of unfinished loft and roof tiles in a Peabody run property on Celandine place – this has been an ongoing issue despite multiple enquiries to the customer care team. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the of the partnership agreement or in the absence of that action as a rogue landlord?

monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.

Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord's complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if the complaint is upheld, including requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.

Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council's Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.

LS7: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Smith – Delay in processing housing applications

<p>Question</p> <p>Applicants to join the housing register are being told that there is a 4-6 month delay before any application will be considered.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell the Council what steps are being taken to address and reduce the backlog?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There is currently a backlog in assessments to join the housing register. Temporary additional staffing has been put in place in the team to increase assessment capacity in order to clear the backlog. We also implemented a new online general register form in the Spring and made other changes to the assessment process to make the assessment process more efficient. Currently the team are prioritising those applications in greatest housing need and have cleared the backlog for band 1 and 2 applications, and are making good progress on band 3. Officers will monitor the impact of these changes over the coming months, ensuring assessment times come down to an acceptable level, and will make further changes if required.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Could you clarify, when it says the team are prioritizing those applications in greatest housing need and have cleared the backlog for band one and band two, I have had representations from ward residents that they are being told that there are 4 to 6 month delays before applications are even looked at. I am confused at how the team can prioritize applications, if they do not look at them for months?</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>We recognize that performance in this area is not as good as it should be and we are taking steps to address that. I am not aware that it should take 4 to 6 months at the moment, particularly now we've to the online system. So if you have specific cases like that, please let me know, I would be happy to escalate the matter and make sure that they're dealt with appropriately.</i></p>

Cabinet Member for Planning

LU1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton - Enforcement action: Single use plastic for street trading

<p>Question</p> <p>What enforcement action has been taken</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Advice is given as part of licensing visits</p>
--	---

<p>against street traders for using non recycled packaging and plastic packaging since the introduction of the updated street trading policy?</p>	<p>but, to date, no enforcement action has been taken.</p> <p>Ahead of The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) (England) Regulations 2023 coming into force, licensing offices agreed that street traders could use up existing stocks. Increasingly, these stocks are running out and wholesale food business suppliers no longer sell non-compliant packaging.</p> <p>Note that whilst not using single-use plastics is an Oxford City Council licence condition, The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) (England) Regulations 2023 are enforced by Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards. Should concerns about the use of single use plastic packaging by street traders arise, licensing officers will, in the first instance, refer complaints to Trading Standards.</p>
---	--

<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>My understanding was that the policy of single use plastic or the ban on that for street trading was going to be implemented straightaway and that there was not going to be this grace period for traders. Based on earlier questions to council as well, I understood that licensing officers were starting to make enforcement visits. So it is surprising now that there has not been any enforcement action taken, since an earlier question that was asked around that. So I would just like some clarification, since our policy on single use plastics in street trading came in last September.</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>We agreed that vendors could use up existing stock, instead of throwing it away. After that, our enforcement officers try to engage and educate first, rather than pursuing heavy handed enforcement. But I'm informed that actually for enforcement, it should now be the trading standard at the county, not for our officers. So if there are issues or you are seeing a violation of the standards, that should be reported to trading standards at the county council.</i></p>
---	---

<p>LU2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Upton – School Street Signage</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Will you join me in requesting the new Secretary of State for Transport to permit the use of illuminated school street signage in England (it is already permitted in Scotland), in order to</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Street signs are a matter for the County Council, so perhaps Cllr Smowton would like to have a word with his colleagues... but if there is evidence that illumination</p>

improve school street signage prominence?	improves the efficacy of a school street sign then I will happily support Cllr Smowton's request, both to government for permission to use them and to the County Council to fund their installation.
---	---

LU3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Upton – Lack of compliance with traffic management plan at Spindleberry Close

Question	Written Response
<p>Despite reassurances from Hills there is continuing use of the road side parking and in fact pavements by workers from the regeneration at Spindleberry Close. Regeneration Council planning Ref no: 23/00405/OUTFUL - Planning Conditions 22 & 71 Traffic Management lays out a clear outline of what is expected from Hills. Can the cabinet member clarify steps taken to ensure compliance as this is not occurring at the moment?</p>	<p>Conditions 22 & 71 required the production of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) which predominantly covers the movement of vehicles into and out of the site, not the parking of workers' vehicles. Where cars are parked appropriately on side roads there is no recourse to planning enforcement. Where cars are parked inappropriately and/or in breach of parking restrictions, such as on pavements, this should be reported to the County Council who have the appropriate powers to fine drivers.</p> <p>The City Council has raised these concerns with their development partner Peabody, who in turn hold the build contract with Hill Group. Peabody have raised the issue with Hill Group who have said they will monitor the situation and follow up with their staff and sub-contractors to remind them not only to park considerately but providing them with the information in the CTMP regarding parking, public transport options and car sharing. To reduce the number of cars being parked near Spindleberry Close, Hill Group have also reached an arrangement with the Kassam Stadium for staff and sub-contractors to obtain permits to park at the Stadium. Hill are also exploring options for off-street parking in other locations around the area.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Is there a timeline to do with the Kasam stadium and when the permits might be</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>I do not know what the timeline is, but I will find out. I appreciate that it is</i></p>

<p><i>forthcoming? We are getting a lot of complaints about this matter.</i></p>	<p><i>annoying, so if they can find a good solution like this, then the sooner the better. I will find out for you. Actually, I am being informed, that it has already been implemented and hopefully the situation will be improving.</i></p>
--	--

LU4: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Oxford’s 10 View Cones

Question	Written Response
<p>Oxford’s 10 view cones surrounding the city considerably limit the potential to build housing inside the city as they limit the height of residential buildings. Can the portfolio holder provide an estimate for how many more homes could be built if the planning regulations around some of the less important cones were relaxed and has this been considered given Oxford’s desperate shortage of housing?</p>	<p>Whilst the City Council’s key objective for the Local Plan is to deliver new housing, there are a number of important considerations in determining the capacity of Oxford to accommodate this. It is essential that the Local Plan process explores all of these considerations and strikes an appropriate balance. The City Council, through national policy, also has a duty to protect and enhance the historic environment through the Local Plan. Protections for the historic environment are not about preventing development from taking place, instead the focus is on managing change so it happens in the right way, so we preserve the historic environment for benefit of future generations.</p> <p>It is important to recognise that the relevant policy of the emerging Local Plan 2040 (Policy HD9) states that proposals located within the View Cones should be designed carefully, be based on an understanding of the roofscape in the area, and that they contribute positively to and enhance views. Although it states: “planning permission will not be granted for development proposed within a View Cone or the setting of a View Cone if it would harm the special significance of the view”, this policy does not rule out development, or prohibit high buildings. Instead, it seeks to ensure that careful design helps maintain and enhance the views which</p>

	<p>Oxford is world renowned for. The City Council is confident that this is the right policy approach to take and will make that case to the Local Plan Inspector.</p> <p>We already allow, and positively encourage, far higher housing densities within the city than our surrounding districts to maximise the number of homes built in the city.</p>
--	--

LU5: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Upton – Bike parking availability in the city	
Question	Written Response
<p>How is the council monitoring the need for bike parking across the city and are there areas that have been identified as high priority/need, how is this being addressed?</p>	<p>There is a general need for bike parking across Oxford. The Council works closely with the County Council, the transport authority, to identify areas where there are opportunities for implementation of additional bike parking on the highway, where there is sufficient space. The Council also responds to requests from the public and ward councillors</p> <p>Through Community Infrastructure Levy funding, the Council delivered 152 public bike parking spaces in the 2022-24 financial years (in addition to 210 spaces on publicly-accessible land belonging to businesses and organisations provided via the Park That Bike scheme) and has just committed to deliver another 150 public spaces later in 2024 in Brasenose Lane, Ship Street, Queen’s Lane, Leopold Street, Broad Street, Observatory Street and South Parade. We are also working on our prioritisation strategy, in order to target remaining funding towards areas of highest need.</p>