

To: Council
Date: 25 November 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

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.

Responses are included where available.

Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the Cllr answering the original question.

This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.

Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for Partnership Working; Leader of the Council

SB1: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Brown – Failed Local Plan Cost

Question	Written Response
How much did the failed Oxford local Plan cost?	The City Council takes a very cost-effective approach to producing Local Plans. Almost all the work is produced in-house. External consultants are only contracted for limited pieces of work where they are not possible to complete without specialist expertise. We also seek to jointly commission work with

	<p>other parties to share the cost wherever possible.</p> <p>The vast majority of the work which was carried out for the 2040 Local Plan continues to be helpful and relevant and will be reused in future work producing a Local Plan. It is also important to other projects such as revising the CIL Charging Schedule, enabling us to secure increased funding towards important infrastructure needs in the city.</p> <p>The spend involved in holding the unsuccessful examination was £41,000, including venue and Inspector’s costs.</p> <p>The budget for the Local Plan production is an annual £100k; this is a very small budget compared to what other councils spend and represents good value for money.</p>
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<p>SB2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Brown – Inspectorate’s Connectivity Failure Claim</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The planning inspectorate cited in their report a failure not just in communication, but also poor connectivity. Do you agree with the inspectorates claim?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The Planning Inspectors do not use the words “connectivity” or “connect” in their letter to the City Council. We did not hold any examination hearings sessions on infrastructure or transport matters, so these were not discussed in any detail.</p>

<p>SB3: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Brown – Elderly in Winter</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The County Council recently passed a Conservative Party motion to strengthen support to low income pensioners despite Labour objections. Will the City Council now be working with the County Council to support the elderly this winter?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The City Council will be working with the County Council to support the elderly this winter via shared campaigns and as well as using support from the Household Support Fund. This will help those on low income to be able to keep warm over the winter. We will be using data that we hold from the revenues and benefits team to reach those on low incomes and those who lost the winter fuel payment.</p>

SB4: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Brown – Four-Day Working Week**Question**

The door has been opened nationally by the new Labour government for public sector workers to move to a four-day week. Is this something that this council will be considering?

Written Response

We have been watching South Cambridgeshire's evaluation of the impact of a four-day working week and continue to do so. We have however no current plans to make such a change.

SB5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown – Postal Delays in East Oxford**Question**

Can the Leader please provide an update on attempts the council has made to push Royal Mail to address ongoing issues with postal delays in East Oxford?

Written Response

I wrote to the Royal Mail chief executive on this matter this month. Separately, I've also publicly expressed our concern over the proposed closure of the St Aldates post office (separate businesses these days but still a vital part of our local postal service).

I'm also hugely grateful for the work that Anneliese Dodds MP has done in highlighting the shortcomings of our postal service on the national and local stage and am aware that she is also still working hard to get a commitment to an improved service.

Oxford's residents and businesses, and the Council itself, rely on timely and reliable postal services for daily operations and personal needs. Unfortunately, significant delays, incorrectly delivered, and inconsistent service, are the experience of many of our local residents, causing at best inconvenience and frustration and at worst, missed appointments and extra charges for late payments.

Alas, I think we're all aware that these are national issues and not just confined to Oxford. Oxford's citizens deserve a

	better service.
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SB6: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown – Process of Equalities Impact Assessments	
Question Can the portfolio holder outline the process for carrying out Equalities Impact Assessments for events hosted by third parties but requiring permission from the council?	Written Response All events on council land are sent out to consultation with statutory agencies as well as key community stakeholders e.g. resident associations and friends of parks groups. Feedback regarding any equalities impacts they may have done would be taken into consideration and mitigations agreed prior to confirming event permits.

SB7: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Brown – Noise Complaint Forms	
Question How are noise and other complaints from one event factored into applications to run the same event in subsequent years?	Written Response Any complaint which we receive about an event (including noise) is kept on file for that event and discussed in debriefs. The team works with event organisers to ensure mitigations for lessons learned so that they are implemented for events in future years.

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

ET1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Turner – Flood Risk Council Owned Properties	
Question How many council-owned commercial	Written Response We do not hold records of flood risk in

and residential properties respectively are at high flood risk within the city and What insurance does the council have in place to manage the financial risk of flooding in these properties?	relation to Council-owned buildings. The Council holds property insurance and in the event of damage by flood, the Council would claim for damages against its insurance policy in the normal way.
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ET2: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Turner – Land on Foxwell Drive	
Question Concerning the land transaction at Land on Foxwell Drive, what benefit does council have in entering an option agreement at this stage ?	Written Response This is very much the standard time to enter into this agreement which is commercially advantageous to the council as landowner. The timing gives certainty to the terms of a transaction in the future.

ET3: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Turner – Oxpens River Bridge Review	
Question Permission to bring a judicial review has been granted for the Oxpens river bridge project, whilst there will be no comment on the project during the undertaking of the review. What if any implications are there for the grant funding?	Written Response The Council is currently working to understand the costs of the delay and working with funders to secure additional funding if needed.

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

AR1: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Smoke Control Area Enforcement	
Question Oxford City Council has recently informed residents of the expansion of the Oxford Smoke-Controlled Area and cites the burning of wood burners and open fires. How will Oxford City Council manage and enforce the smoke-controlled area, in particular in relation to boat dwellers who depend on wood burners and school with biomass boilers	Written Response Enforcement of the Smoke –Controlled Area is undertaken by the Council’s environmental health team – typically in response to an official smoke nuisance complaint. Biomass is not classed as an authorised fuel for use within SCAs, so biomass boilers need to follow the same Smoke

<p>which may burn wood pallets?</p>	<p>Control Area rules that are in place for wood burning stoves.</p> <p>Moored vessels are not covered by Smoke Control Area legislation.</p>
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AR2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Boat Dwellers Gas Switch and Policy Impact

<p>Question</p> <p>Suppose the city council does decide to enforce the new rules on boat dwellers. In that case, they are likely to switch to heavier propane type gases including LPG as a heating source, indirectly encouraging the use of fossil fuels. Is this policy discriminatory?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Moored vessels are not covered by Smoke Control Area legislation.</p>
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AR3: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Restrictions on Park Fire Pits

<p>Question</p> <p>The British summer is well known for being short, and unpredictable. Families often have BBQs in warmer weather, will the city council be imposing restrictions on BBQs and the fire pit located in Florence Park?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There is no identified demand for BBQs in Florence Park. This may be due to the fact that nearly all the houses in this area have their own gardens. The 'fire pit' lies within the Naturescape enclosure and is only used as part of organised forest school sessions. The Council will continue to impose restrictions on BBQs in parks due to Health and Safety and air quality concerns, but is looking to trial allowing BBQs at Wolvercote.</p> <p>The Smoke Control Area only covers buildings with chimneys thus BBQs are not included. There already exists legislation to deal with bonfires causing a nuisance which you can read here, but again that does not include BBQs: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/air-quality-management/bonfires</p>
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AR4: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Clean Air and Traffic Congestion

Question

The city councils letter states this is being done so residents can breathe “breathe clean air”. How does the council justify this when car journeys have become longer, more congested in both the city and in urban areas and when air quality has deteriorated in areas neighbouring LTN scheme. For example “the city councils Cowley Road (James Street) saw the highest increase (35%) in NO2 levels – from 20ug/m3 to 27ug/m3 (a 7ug/m3 increase) This is likely due to vehicles diverted from the surrounding LTNs”. Source: Oxford City Council [link to OM](#)

Written Response

Overall NO2 levels in Oxford decreased by 14% on average in 2023, compared with a 9% average reduction across the UK. Pollution is now 33% lower compared with pre-pandemic (2019) levels.

The introduction of electric buses across the city, more electric Hackney Carriages, and the expansion of the Smoke-Controlled Areas is expected to continue that trend.

The reference of an increase of 35% of the NO2 levels measured on James St (20 to 27ug/m3) is now outdated as it refers to the year 2022. In fact, the most recent monitoring results (from 2023) show that there was a 20% reduction of the levels measured at that location (the 27 ug/m3 measured in 2022 now reduced to 23 ug/m3 in 2023). 23ug/m3 is also a result that is currently 42.5% below the current legal limit value for NO2 (40 g/m3) and 23.3% below the City's own local annual mean target for this pollutant (30ug/m3), a target that the city has committed to achieve (under its current Air Quality Action Plan) across the city by the end of 2025.

AR5: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – Trees Felled for Pedestrian Bridge

Question

Is there an update on how many trees have been felled and will be felled at Grandpoint to accommodate the pedestrian ‘Oxpens’ bridge and Donnington recreation ground to

Written Response

The proposals for the Oxpens River Bridge and path at Donnington support the aim of encouraging more people to walk and cycle and reduce car journeys that currently impact the City. The

<p>accommodate the new cycle track?</p>	<p>planning applications for the proposed bridge and the path at Donnington include tree surveys identifying trees to be removed (Arboricultural Statement , Arboricultural Impact Assessment). Both schemes also have a calculation of the canopy cover impacted by the proposals(23_02506_CT3-CANOPY COVER ASSESSMENT-3170513.pdf ,22_02446_CT3-PLANNING STATEMENT-3283250.pdf) and replacement planting (0001 OVERVIEW,B A0 that ensures canopy cover is maintained in accordance with Oxford Local Plan policy G7.</p> <p>For the bridge, 31 trees and a part of a woodland group are proposed for removal and replanting includes six native trees to the north and three to the south of the Thames, in addition to 40 feathered trees that will be integrated into the wider landscaping works. The replanting scheme can be found in the planning application ref 23/01155/PDT.</p> <p>The Donnington cycleway connecting path passes through a tree group in the southwest corner of the site. Four larger trunks and several smaller stems will need to be removed to facilitate the path, and these will be replaced by seven new trees on site and a hedgerow and extra planting offsite. As a result, the Case Officers report concludes that: <i>“the proposal is considered to yield a net gain in canopy cover and would enhance the appearance of the park by the placement of trees in locations where there are currently large gaps in the tree cover.”</i> p214, para 10.35 and 10.36 of the Report here. Details of both the onsite and offsite planting can be seen in the planning application ref 22/02446/CT3.</p>
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AR6: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Railton – Solar Energy**Question**

At the Council meeting of July 17th 2023, the Council passed an amended motion (Minute 27) that included the following:
Therefore this Council requests that the Head of Corporate Strategy continues to investigate the feasibility of extending solar installations on spaces in Oxford including Park and Rides, and that the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice provide a verbal update at a Council meeting before the end of 2023.

As it is now nearly the end of 2024 can the Cabinet Member explain to the Council why no report has been made as promised and when Councillors can expect to be updated about this important proposal?

Written Response

A [paper](#) on the feasibility of extending solar installations on Council car parks was discussed at the Climate & Environment Panel on 20 November.

AR7: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Railton – Donnington Cycle and Footpath**Question**

In relation to the Donnington cycle and footpath proposals, what are the benefits do you see that override local objections?

Written Response

The large majority of local community comments in the recent planning consultation were in support of the scheme, and not objections. The scheme benefits outweighing objections are set out below.

Accessibility improvements - Donnington Recreation ground will be accessible to wheelchair users, parents with prams, and children cycling to school, which it is not currently, and accessible in all weathers.

Increases in children playing sport - The current rut is unsafe, and limits number of pitches available. The new path will enable an increased numbers of children and young people to take part in sport through allowing the marking out of more football pitches. This includes the Donnington U17 team to play on site,

	<p>benefitting older teenagers, and reducing pollution from travel to other sites. Also, the club plan to develop more women and girl's football with increased space on pitches</p> <p>Safer and quicker active travel - an all-weather surface for this Strategic Cycle Route across the Recreation Ground will enabling safe year-round use. This will include local primary aged children being able to cycle to St Mary and St Johns school, further reducing local pollution, improving air quality as well as tying down new healthier lifestyles and travel patterns for families</p> <p>The scheme will also serve to removing the diagonal rut caused by the current desire line for walkers and cyclists, which is a trip hazard, and which is getting deeper.</p>
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AR8: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Railton – Donnington Cycle Path	
Question	Written Response
<p>What is the estimated cost for this Donnington cycle path project and will the relevant contracts be put out to tender?</p>	<p>The Donnington shared cycleway and footway is part of the wider City Cycle Routes programme for which funding has been received to cover the project management, design, and construction of the 4 cycleways, with the Donnington cycle path project having a budget of £431k.</p> <p>Following due diligence by an independent consultant it was agreed that ODS were competent to carry out the works and were in an acceptable price band. The process conforms to Procurement of ODS for capital programme projects. The decision was taken in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules - Part 19.22(d) of the Constitution A link to the published Officer Decision for the City Cycle Routes contract is here.</p>

	The expected site works cost for the Donnington cycleway is £259k.
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<p>AR9: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Railton – Trees felled around Donnington and Grandpont Bridge</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The administration sets out its green agenda. Donnington vanity project and Grandpont bridge (trees were felled even before planning permission was granted !!) contradict that. The amount of trees and mature trees removed goes against its own stated objectives.</p> <p>Removing mature trees and replacing them elsewhere is not the answer for this type of project.</p> <p>Trees should only be removed as an absolute necessity and for major projects and adequately replaced. How do you justify this against council objectives or are our objectives just to create a cycle paths at any cost to the environment?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The proposals at Donnington and Grandpont will comply with Oxford Local Plan policy G7 which ensures that ‘any loss of tree canopy cover should be mitigated by the planting of new trees or introduction of additional tree cover (with consideration to the predicted future tree canopy on the site following development)’.</p> <p>In both schemes efforts have been made through the design to minimise the impact on trees. Where it is essential to remove trees replacement planting is proposed with careful consideration of the locations and species to ensure the tree canopy cover is maintained into the future. (For details see the answer to AR5).</p> <p>Some trees at Grandpont were removed ahead of the planning determination to avoid disturbance from tree removal during the bird nesting season. The time restrictions attached to the funding for the bridge meant that delaying felling until after planning permission had been granted would have delayed the project and could have impacted the availability of funding.</p> <p>It was acknowledged at the time that if planning permission was not granted replacement tree planting would be carried out to maintain the tree cover in the area. Planning permission was resolved to be granted in March 2024 and went through the planning review committee in April 2024 before being issued in July 2024. Since then, a JR has been submitted and therefore it has not been possible to proceed with works to the</p>

	original programme.
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AR10: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Railton – Budget of Zero Carbon	
<p>Question</p> <p>Many of the Zero Carbon Council / Net Zero City initiatives are subject to external funding. Are there currently initiatives at risk and are there implications for the councils overall budget as a consequence?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>There are always risks associated with grant-funded projects, which are set out in project risk registers. Many 'Zero Carbon Council' initiatives are around the installation of energy efficiency measures or solar panels that deliver cost savings or deliver income. The risk to the Council's overall budget associated with completed projects is minimal. However, for projects such as the installation of further electric vehicle charge-points in Council carparks using external LEVI funding, the earnings assumed from these in the Budget will remain at risk until the projects are delivered and the infrastructure in use.</p>

AR11: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton – Flooding	
<p>Question</p> <p>Does the portfolio holder think there are lessons that can be learned from the recent flooding in Valencia, Pakistan and elsewhere about climate adaptation and mitigation in Oxford?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Flash flooding is a risk associated with concentrated periods of very heavy rainfall. Many scientists suggest that climate change will see more frequent heavy rainfall episodes across the UK, with every degree Celsius that Earth's atmospheric temperature rises, the amount of water vapor in the atmosphere can increase by about 7%.</p> <p>Oxford suffers from three different forms of flooding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - surface water (as happened in September) - groundwater, which effects south & west Oxford (as it did this January) - fluvial (or river flooding) as we last had in 2014 <p>Different areas of the city suffer from</p>

	<p>different types and the response, mitigation & adaption will be different for each.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council is developing a Climate Adaptation Plan for the county with input from Oxford City Council. The County Council has primary responsibility for managing the risk of surface water flooding and the City Council works with them.</p>
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Cabinet Member for a Safer Oxford

<p>LA1: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Arshad – Cross-party Community Engagement Update</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Following your response at the previous Council meeting regarding engaging with cross party members to support the community, are there any further updates following on your suggestion of cross-party community engagement?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Thank you Cllr Rehman.</p> <p>In your address at Council in October you described the important role local councillors have in engaging with their constituents and understanding their concerns, particularly in light of the disturbances in the summer.</p> <p>In Oxford we have excellent relationships with the police and their Community and Diversity Officer, who played a significant engagement role during that period. The Oxford Council of Faiths, representing faith and civic leaders were also instrumental in promote tolerance and understanding in our city. The mosques and other faith organisations continue to play a central role in their activities. The Council’s Locality Manager’s also have a key role in community engagement and the officer for East</p>

	<p>Oxford is in regular contact with the mosques, and other faith and civic organisations in the area.</p> <p>I suggest the next step is for us and relevant Council officers to discuss where you feel the Council could build on these existing approaches and encourage all of us to continue listening to our communities and feeding back to the police, Council and other agencies.</p>
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LA3: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Arshad – Safer Oxford	
Question	Written Response
<p>While we do have a defibrillator in Town Hall, and several other locations across the city centre, several defibrillators are in restricted locations and only one defib in the city centre is in a public and always open location (outside The Bear Inn). Does the cabinet member support investigating new potential locations, both within and outside the city centre, for fully publicly accessible defibs?</p>	<p>Whilst the Council are not responsible for extending the availability of defibrillators in public spaces, I support this type of initiative that could save lives of people in our city. The Council have recently been working with a local organisation to raise money for the installation of bleed kits in local communities within Oxford, an important related public health intervention.</p>

LA4: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Arshad – Safer Oxford	
Question	Written Response
<p>The Labour Government’s decision to cut the Winter Fuel Payment to non-benefit claiming pensioners is a great worry to many of our elderly residents and their family members. Many who struggle to get by will miss out due to not realising that they are eligible, or otherwise slipping through the cracks. Many of our elderly residents, including those in our own City housing are at risk of isolation, and there is a real risk that they may endure freezing temperatures without being able to fully heat their homes. Does the Cabinet Member know what, or can they get an update on what, Oxford</p>	<p>This is not in the remit of the Oxford Community Safety Partnership.</p>

<p>Safer Communities Partnership might be doing to ensure that we are looking out for our elderly? And will our City be highlighting, to the Government, the impact the payment cut has upon our residents?</p>	
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LA5: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Arshad – Noise Complaints	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder explain how noise complaints are recorded, triaged and enforced in the absence of nightline and the noise app, and since the cutting of the out of hours noise service? And are they logged in a central place for analysis?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Noise complaints are recorded using an online tool accessible to the complainant called the Noise App. Other methods include keeping a diary of incidents and using calibrated noise recording equipment. The email address for noise complaints is noise@oxford.gov.uk The complaints are reviewed by the Community Response Team if they relate to domestic premises, and by the Business Regulation Team if related to commercial premises. The response time for contacting the complainant is 5 working days. The Council engage with the subject of the complaint and adhere to our ASB Policy when resolving the cases. Some cases may require the use of Community Protection Notices or Noise Abatement Notices.</p> <p>The data is held centrally and analysed, using a dashboard to identify trends.</p>

Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

NC1: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Chapman – Community Centre Cafe Plans	
<p>Question</p> <p>Are the plans to place digital cafes at our community centres, similar to what has been launched at Westgate library?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Oxford City Council's face to face customer service operates from the Westgate Library every Monday,</p>

	<p>Wednesday and Friday between 10 am and 3pm. On a Monday and Wednesday this space is shared with Citizen Advice Oxford. In addition, the City Council's Customer Service Officers regularly attend community ladders across the City. This provides citizens with one-to-one support and direct access to a range of City Council services.</p> <p>The Digital Café at the Oxford Westgate Library is hosted on the first Monday of every month (2pm-4pm), and allows people who are struggling with, or are unfamiliar with, technology to find help and support with using their mobile, laptop or tablet. The initiative offers people free informal, one to one support around basic digital skills, with access to digital devices and the internet. It encourages and teaches people how to easily use digital technology as part of their everyday life.</p> <p>The launch of this Digital Café is a collaboration between NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), Oxfordshire County Council, and Oxford City Council. There are presently no plans for digital cafés to be rolled out in other locations across the City.</p>
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NC2: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Chapman – Figures Comparison	
<p>Question</p> <p>We are still receiving complaints around fly tipping. What are the current figures and how do they compare to previous years?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>I share Councillor Rehman’s concern about fly tipping in the city which disfigures our neighbourhoods and is illegal. We have seen an increase in the level of fly-tipping incidents across the city in 2024. Between January and October this year – we have recorded 4,422 incidents of fly tipping. This includes everything from a sofa being dumped on the street to a bag of</p>

	<p>household or business waste left next to a public litter bin. That is a 9% increase on the same period in 2023.</p> <p>I am working with officers to explore ways in which we can speed up the bulky waste pick up service especially in relation to soft furnishings and make it easier for people to book specific slots online. This will make using the bulky waste service easier and more attractive. We also have a very rapid response to fly tipping once it has been reported to ODS. Whilst we would like to prevent it in the first place, this at least means its anti-social impact is being tackled swiftly.</p>
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NC3: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Chapman – Review of Glyphosate	
<p>Question</p> <p>Given the concerns raised by local campaigner Chaka Artwell, can we have confirmation that the use of Glyphosate remains under constant review?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As I made clear in my published response to Mr Artwell in July, we will keep the use of Glyphosate under <i>periodic</i> review as herbicide manufacturers are working to improve the effectiveness of Glyphosate alternatives; and monitor the regulatory environment closely as this could change at a future point.</p>

NC4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Chapman – Resurfacing of Pavements	
<p>Question</p> <p>There has been much needed resurfacing of pavements in Northfield Brook and Blackbird leys carried out by a company outsourced via ODS. The resurfacing is full of bumps and cracks in for example Brambling Way and Kestrel Crescent with residents concerned about the risk of falls for the elderly. How will this be addressed and tackled and prevented from occurring again?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The works are taking place as part of the S42 Highway agreement where ODS, via Oxford City Council, are responsible for some areas of highway in the city. The same treatments have been used in other areas of the city in recent years, such as around Hollow Way and Cutteslowe. A quality inspection has been undertaken and while the work does not look as visually pleasing as a newly resurfaced footway would it has been done correctly. The material will wear and weather in and in the meantime ODS will monitor it closely. The surface ODS has applied is a thin</p>

	<p>vener overlay to seal and prevent further damage from water ingress. It follows the existing surface, regulating any areas where there were minor depressions in the footways. The product is poured onto the footways and applied with a brush finish. This is why you will see "waves"/ brush marks and a textured finished surface. I have been assured that this does weather over time.</p> <p>Before and during the works, notices and signs are placed on cones and lamp columns. Unfortunately, some people chose to ignore the signs and advice from the operatives on site and either drove, or walked over the newly laid surface which has marked the surface treatment.</p> <p>ODS will continue to monitor the area and should any issues arise will liaise with the sub-contractor to revisit.</p>
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NC5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Chapman – Bus Stop Shelters	
<p>Question</p> <p>It took over two years for a bus shelter on knights road damaged to be replaced and it was initially without a seat despite the initial case being raised via a disabled resident who needed a seat to be able to access bus services. There are two further stops on pegasus road without a shelter. Are there equality impact assessments for placement of bus stops without seats or shelters as the impact on elderly and disabled residents and overall bus use is noticeable?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The Council has awarded a new contract for the management and installation of bus shelters to Clear Channel. A briefing was held on 9th October for all Councillors to discuss the terms of the proposal prior to awarding the contract. The specification for shelters has been reviewed and, in the future, where appropriate, benches will be installed in new shelters. This assessment will include an equalities assessment, and the base specification requested by the Council does include benches. The stops on Pegasus Road will be reviewed to understand whether shelters can be installed but it will be subject to Planning and Licencing from County.</p>

NC6: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr L Smith – Competitive Tender Approach
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<p>Question</p> <p>ODS is the sole contractor to improve services, and efficiency would a more competitive and open approach be sensible in light of budget pressures by inviting an opportunity for competitors to tender?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The Council is always keen to make sure it gets Value for Money for its spend with any supplier. Recently it commissioned an external review of the cost of ODS's council house repairs service to the HRA. This is expected to drive down prices and ensure the HRA can afford to pay for the repairs it needs to fund.</p> <p>But we need to see the relationship with ODS in the round. It is about far more than simply the cost of services.</p> <p>The Council's relationship with ODS brings significant benefits to both parties. Over the next three years ODS is making significant savings on its core ODSL operations of approaching £1M as well as sharing the costs of joint systems and back office services, which help reduce costs to the Council.</p> <p>Most importantly, the Oxford Model means that any ODS surpluses are available to be returned to the Council by way of a dividend. ODS is meeting these dividend targets, which are a vital contribution to funding key public services. In an outsourced system, those surpluses leave the city and end up in the pockets of private investors.</p> <p>And finally, the existence of a long-term relationship between ODS and the Council guarantees well paid and secure jobs for local people and a skills base on which to build ODS's commercial operations, which in turn will increase the return to the Council by way of dividends.</p>
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<p>NC7: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Chapman – ODS taxi servicing</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>An integral part of the agreement to extend by one year the deadline for ultra-low emissions standards for our Hackney Carriages was that ODS would satisfy the unmet need of maintenance services for the LEVC taxis. The LEVC fleet require specialist attention and are bound</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>ODS renewed their LEVC warranty repairer status in April and work closely with COLTA members in keeping their vehicles maintained to manufacturers standards. We have two trained technicians and the lead time for bookings is consistent with other service</p>

<p>by strict warranty terms. Is ODS meeting the demand highlighted in the Taxi Licensing report and COLTA report to General Purposes Licensing Committee in February?</p>	<p>requests – approximately 2 to 3 weeks. We can meet the demand but ask customers to plan around this typical lead time.</p>
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Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford

CM1: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Munkonge – WCC

Question	Written Response
<p>Wolvercote’s youth team has a close relationship with Cherwell Upper School, and youth training and development is conducted in tandem with the school’s cricket programme. WCC has recently sponsored the training and qualification of 10 coaches and 12 umpires to improve its contribution to the cricketing community, and to promote improved performance for both the adult and youth teams.</p> <p>In 2019 WCC raised over £60,000 via grant and private sources and donated this money to the council to build public cricket nets at Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park. The only condition on public access was that a lease and/or terms of use agreement be signed with the council. The Heads of Terms of this lease were agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2022 (see attached). The failure of the Council to complete this administrative process in a timely manner has had, and continues to have, significant impacts on the club’s ability to deliver opportunities for its members, particularly young players.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet member give me a commitment that this issue will be</p>	<p>Our sincere apologies to Wolvercote Cricket Club. We recognise the excellent work of the club within the community and its fundraising efforts.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to a number of staff changes and subsequent capacity issues within the team, the final drafting of the lease has taken longer than we would usually hope. The drafting of the lease has now been allocated to a member of the legal services team and we would endeavour to have a draft version with the club by March 2025.</p>

resolved quickly and efficiently, with a date?	
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CM2: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Munkonge – Basketball in Parks

Question	Written Response
<p>Many basketball courts in Council run parks in Oxford have damaged or missing nets on the basketball hoops. Can the Cabinet Member ensure that these nets are checked on a regular basis and repaired or replaced when needed?</p>	<p>The basketball hoops in Oxford City Parks are managed on behalf of the City Council by Oxford Direct Services. Each of the sites are inspected on a monthly basis as part of the overall playground and multi use games area inspections. The order for the replacement nets at sites where they are damaged or missing has been placed and these will be addressed over the next few weeks.</p>

CM3: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Munkonge – Cemetery Update

Question	Written Response
<p>Please can we have an update on the cemetery?</p>	<p>The new burial meadow scheme is at planning stage with South Oxfordshire District Council, with key milestones recently achieved on addressing requests of statutory consultees. Completion of a property agreement securing access to the land means winter groundwater monitoring is now underway for the Environment Agency; and additional design work seeks to address County Highways requests. In addition, a recent archaeological scan of the land has revealed nothing of significance; and a net parking gain in the public carpark used by sports clubs is being communicated.</p> <p>Subject to agreements with objecting consultees being concluded in spring 2025 with a planning approval, then site works are programmed to start in autumn 2025.</p> <p>Note there is high availability of reclaimed grave plots in the existing Oxford cemeteries, and Burial Services have also been able to make a new area</p>

	of Mecca-aligned plots available to families with this choice. Relevant groups and organisations have been updated on this. A wider scheme update will also be taken to the Interfaith Forum next month.
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CM4: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Munkonge – Speed Limit in Parks	
Question With concerns surrounding the speed and weight of ebikes (legal & illegal) is the cabinet member aware of the 20mph speed limit for Royal Parks and willing to consider this rule to protect all park users in Oxford?	Written Response All legal e-bikes are restricted to 15mph. There is no practicable way of monitoring or enforcing the speed of bicycles in parks, other than through potential targeted police operations. They are unlikely to be able to provide regular resources to do this, but they do now undertake periodic operations to identify and confiscate illegal e-bikes.

CM5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Munkonge – Car Boot Sale Kassam Stadium	
Question There is a weekly Sunday car boot sale at Kassam stadium which is very popular with all local residents and provides critical provisions. Has the private land owner been approached to allow this market once the lease expires?	Written Response I would be happy to write to Mr Kassam and make such a request.

CM6: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Munkonge– South Park Fireworks	
Question Will the approach taken to this year’s firework display on South Park become standard practice for similar events in the future?	Written Response Mitigation measures for events in South Park will continue to need to reflect the size and character of the event taking place, the ground conditions at time (partly dependent on the time of year), and likely impact. Measures required will therefore not be the same for every event. However, the measures put in

	place for this year's firework event will provide a likely template for this and other similar size events taking place later in the year/during wetter summers.
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Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

LS1: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr L Smith – Protecting Public Funds	
Question With Housing Benefit covering a large proportion of service charges, who is responsible for ensuring that this budget is not misused or misallocated due to these inaccuracies?	Written Response Some elements of service charges such as meals, laundry, cleaning or personal care are ineligible for Housing Benefit in accordance with the Housing Benefit Regulations. The decision on the amount of Housing Benefit paid in accordance with these Regulations, is made by the Councils Housing Benefit officers under the management of the Head of Financial Services (Section 151 Officer)

LS2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr L Smith – Accountability and Oversight	
Question Why have these discrepancies gone unnoticed by regulatory bodies or local authorities until now? If oversight is not your responsibility, who should residents turn to for support in holding housing providers accountable?	Written Response It is understood that the issue being referred to relates to defects in a tenanted property belonging to a Registered Provider within the city. The city council wouldn't adjust the eligible service charges for a specific claimant due to a specific complaint they may have about the services that a landlord is charging. This is outside of HB scheme and remit of the department and is something that the resident would need to take up with their landlord. The eligible services are set for everyday provision and not for specific incidents that may occur, such as a leaking roof. Eligible service charges would not be adjusted by

	the LA and we would continue to pay the eligible rent irrespective of individual circumstances.
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LS3: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr L Smith – Compensation Figure	
Question 83% of stage 1 complaints upheld with compensation or completing repairs. Can we have a figure of the compensation paid?	Written Response 83% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld in 2023/24, not Stage 1 complaints. £4,850 was paid on stage 2 complaints, over and above awards that may have been made already made at stage 1. £14,500 of payments were made at stage 1.

LS4: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr L Smith – Service Improvement	
Question 30 cases were escalated to stage 2 of which 25 were upheld. This has occurred even with service improvements being undertaken. What further measures is council taking to improve service?	Written Response To clarify, even where service improvements have been put in place and/or works completed, a case upheld at Stage 1 that progresses to Stage 2 will still be upheld at Stage 2 on the basis of the initial findings, even if we do not uphold the tenant's reason for taking it to Stage 2. These will include cases where the complaint was upheld at Stage 1 and compensation offered, but the complainant disagreed with the amount of compensation. There will also be cases where a Stage 1 complaint was not upheld that will progress to the second stage for review.

LS5: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr L Smith – Winter Housing Repairs	
Question The cabinet member will be aware of the issues faced by the residents of some of our City housing, especially older blocks	Written Response The Council commissioned a 100% stock condition survey of all its stock in 2023

<p>of flats such as on St Aldates. Issues of mould, inadequate insulation and ventilation, structural issues and pests are too common. In the light of the above issues, what will the council be doing to ensure that our tenants are ready for the winter and living in decent, safe, homes?</p>	<p>and this is approaching completion in spring 2025.</p> <p>In December, Cabinet will be asked to approve the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, the associated Asset Management Strategy and the Five-Year Investment Programme to address the concerns raised.</p> <p>The stock condition survey will inform the investment programme proposed and the blocks referred to will be included and provided appropriate investment.</p>
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LS6: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr L Smith – Refugee Resettlement Scheme

<p>Question We have heard, at Housing and Homelessness Panel, that Oxford City Council expects to house the minimum requisite families for purposes of the refugee resettlement scheme (8 households). Is there an ambition from the cabinet member to be more ambitious with this scheme, as the funding allows for any number of settled families under the scheme?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Currently the Council has no plans to review the commitment of eight households minimum per year supported through refugee resettlement schemes. Eight households is a challenging annual target for the Council due to the high cost and limited availability of housing stock in Oxford, but one we continue to meet. It is the current optimal figure. A larger commitment would require recruiting a larger resettlement team to support households, and this would require a significant increase in the number of properties to be sourced (in order to obtain additional grant to pay for the staffing), which in the current housing market is not possible. We will however ensure that where current staffing capacity and housing availability allows us to go slightly beyond the commitment of eight we will do this, which is why that flexibility has been provided.</p>
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LS7: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr L Smith – Cost of Affordable Housing

<p>Question Many tenants of housing associations are crippled by the high cost of so-called</p>	<p>Written Response All Housing Associations are regulated</p>
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<p>affordable housing which the council operates via the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing on behalf of this partnership. Worse still is the lack of care and support for repairs to pre existing tenants whilst the same associations have procured contracts for new housing . How will the cabinet member work to ensure that the needs of existing tenants are met and that the costs of such accommodation is reduced?</p>	<p>by the Regulator of Social Housing and the Regulatory Standards that are in place.</p> <p>These include the Rent Standard, which controls rent and service charge levels; the Safety and Quality Standard, which covers repairs, maintenance, decency of accommodation and health and safety compliance; and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard which sets out regulatory expectations around accessibility and supporting tenants, as well as complaints.</p> <p>The local authority has no powers of intervention regarding Housing Associations on these matters.</p>
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<p>LS8: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr L Smith – Relocation of Football Pitch</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>What specific plans are in place to ensure that the football pitches specifically Sandy Lane football pitch currently proposed for development will be replaced or relocated? The cabinet member at last council spoke of use of neighbouring pitches in Littlemore in accordance with Playing pitch and Green spaces strategies. This pitch is already oversubscribed and hence would not be able to accommodate all the current users of the Sandy Lane pitch.</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The question relating to the specific plans for the football pitches would be one for the applicant (OX Place) to address in the planning application.</p> <p>The site has been allocated for housing development in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Enhanced outdoor sport facilities should be provided, in line with the requirements of Policy G5, with pitches at least equivalent to 2 full-sized football pitches and one junior pitch provided.</p> <p>Any proposal will need to set out how this has been provided, and the planning service will review any proposals closely as and when an application is submitted.</p>

<p>LS9: From Cllr R Smith to Cllr L Smith – Crime in Alice Smith House</p>

Question

The annual crime rate associated with Alice Smith House and Alice Smith Square is 200 per thousand population, compared to 115 per thousand population across Oxford. Crimes associated with Alice Smith House include in the past year Sept 23 Aug 24. A higher-than-average rate of violence and sexual offences, public order offences criminal damage and arson. Given the higher-than-average rate of violent crime how is the city council managing Alice Smith House? Does the city council have a proactive strategy to reduce crime emanating from Alice Smith House?

	Alice Smith (relative rating)	LA (per 1000 pop)
Violence and sexual offences	85.6	7/10
Public Order	24.1	7/10
Criminal damage and arson	16.9	7/10
Bicycle theft	11.8	8/10
Anti-Social behaviour	10.9	3/10
Drugs	10.5	7/10
Other theft	10.5	5/10
Vehicle crime	10	6/10
Other crime	8.66	7/10
Burglary	5.01	5/10
Theft from a person	2.73	3/10
Possession of weapons	1.82	5/10
Robbery	0.456	2/10
Shoplifting	0.456	2/10

Data source: data.police.uk

Written Response

The data is recorded crime from the police crime recording system. The recorded crimes do not all emanate from Alice Smith House and the actual number of recorded crimes in the area will be lower than the relative rating.

The responsibility for investigating crime lies with the police. The Council work closely with the local police to support their activities and prevent crime.

The Council and police met with the local community in October to discuss local community safety concerns. Information was given out on who to report to and what local people can do regarding crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Council has put extra money in the budget to increase our capacity to respond to anti-social behaviour and to prevent lone working of officers attending incidents.

LU1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Gibbs Crescent Redevelopment**Question**

What has happened to the rebuilding of Gibbs crescent as there seems to be little or no activity?

Written Response

The contractor went into Administration in June 2023, so building work ceased. A2Dominion coordinated with the administrators to clear materials and equipment from the site. A2Dominion have now retendered the project and have successfully secured a contractor to advance the scheme. A2Dominion have continued to fund archaeological work, while awaiting confirmation of grant funding from Homes England to facilitate the project's delivery. The Council holds regular meetings with A2Dominion to review this site, which include discussions regarding the s106 agreement conditions.

LU2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Upton – Collins Street Redevelopment**Question**

An increasing number of small children living on Collins Street are enjoying playing out on this street, which also forms a key route to East Oxford Primary School. What are the proposed public realm improvements for Collins Street to accompany the council's development of the old games hall in this location, and the status of the removal of the short term parking bays opposite the A2 Dominion building?

Written Response

There is no specific improvement to the public realm, bar the new building itself. The new flats and provision of the private terraces to the ground floor will improve natural surveillance and provide more security. There will be no car parking provided for the flats, so no additional traffic will be created as the development prioritises access by walking, cycling and use of public transport.

LU3: From Cllr Snowton to Cllr Upton – NPPF Changes / Green Belt**Question**

Do you anticipate that proposed changes to NPPF paragraph 144 (formerly 147), beginning "...When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries", and

Written Response

Oxford has a longstanding housing crisis and need for new homes, while at the same time having a highly constrained

<p>specifically the obligation to “consider other sustainable Green Belt locations”, may alter previous Green Belt Reviews’ conclusions not to allocate sites on Green Belt land falling within Oxford City?</p>	<p>supply of developable land. For this reason, our neighbouring authorities have previously agreed to allocate land to cater for our unmet needs, usually on sites removed from Green Belt within their authority areas. Therefore, it has long been essential that Oxford demonstrates it has done what it can to identify suitable housing sites within its own boundaries, including on Green Belt land.</p> <p>Development allocations on Green Belt where there would be more than a moderate impact on Green Belt function has been avoided, and this is still not required by the proposed amended NPPF wording. The majority of Oxford’s Green Belt is at high risk of flooding and/or is an important biodiversity site. Significant sites that aren’t constrained in this way have already been removed from the Green Belt as part of previous reviews.</p> <p>Of course, it will be necessary to review the Green Belt again to see if any sites meet the new definition of ‘Grey Belt’ and there is the possibility that one or two small sites may, and whilst we welcome any opportunity to deliver more homes within our boundary it will not significantly impact the quantum of our unmet need.</p>
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LU4: From Cllr Snowton to Cllr Upton – NPPF Changes / Upward Extensions	
<p>Question</p> <p>Do you anticipate that proposed changes to NPPF paragraph 122 (formerly 124), which would remove the requirement for upward extensions to respect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings, to substantially increase the opportunity to increase housing capacity by increasing building heights?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The City Council responded positively to this proposed change in the NPPF consultation. We have not seen much appetite in the city to explore the potential of upward extensions (which may have a range of practical and structural limitations) but it is possible that this change to the NPPF could encourage higher residential buildings.</p>

	They will of course need to be well designed and to comply with the policies we have to protect existing dwellings.
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LU5: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Upton – Revised Standard Method	
<p>Question</p> <p>The proposed revision to the Standard Method sets a benchmark of 5,151 dwellings per annum (dpa) across all of Oxfordshire, which is much higher than either the old Standard Method (3,229dpa) or the Housing and Economic Need Assessment (HENA) CE method (4,402dpa). It is slightly higher in fact than the total of current Local Plans drawn up under the Growth Deal, which total rates of around 5,042dpa, with some vagueness due to differing time windows for different plans.</p> <p>In view of this remarkable increase in obligation across the county, while the final decision on any Local Plan rests with Council, will the Cabinet commit itself to planning for the new Standard Method figures rather than attempting to push for still-higher numbers, thereby eliminating a key bone of contention between neighbouring councils?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>We await the final version of the NPPF to see how the new Standard Method figures are set and what the overall pictures for Oxford, and Oxfordshire are.</p> <p>However, it is clear that the government intends to significantly increase the overall level of housing which the City Council supports and welcomes.</p> <p>It looks likely that the City Council will now proceed with a Local Plan under the new NPPF and will of course follow what its approach is in terms of housing need. You have selectively quoted the fact that the HENA method gives lower numbers for Oxfordshire as a whole, while neglecting to mention that for Oxford itself it gives numbers that are significantly higher.</p> <p>It is worth noting that South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and Cherwell District Councils are not intending to use the new Standard Method figures for their own housing needs. They have instead elected to proceed with their plans using the old standard method, which has a much lower level of housing need. This means that there will be a significant period of time (until the subsequent round of Local Plans) where none of that newly identified need will be provided for in any Oxfordshire Local Plan.</p> <p>I do hope the councillor will encourage his colleagues in our surrounding districts to use the new Standard Method in their emerging Local Plans. The fact that they are rushing to get their plans submitted</p>

	<p>using the old Standard Method is highly disappointing and I'm sure he would join me in challenging the inadequacy of their proposed provision.</p>
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<p>LU6: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Upton – CIL Funds</p>	
<p>Question</p>	<p>Written Response</p>
<p>Under CIL regulations, LPAs manage the neighbourhood portion of CIL, whereby Neighbourhood Forums invite applications for funds for local benefit, and, if agreed by the NF, the application is considered, approved and administered by the LPA.</p> <p>I am aware of many cases where there have been considerable delays in Oxford City Council fulfilling its role in this process in a timely manner. This has led to considerable extra administrative work for the volunteers who run Neighbourhood Forums. More importantly, local groups who have applied for and been granted funds in good faith have not received them within a reasonable timescale. Indeed, I am aware of one application where members of a local association have contracted with a supplier on the basis of an application being approved and dates given by the City Council, and have ended up having to pay the supplier from their own, private resources because of delays on the part of the City Council both in approving the grant then processing the payment, and in communication between departments.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet member undertake to work with me on an urgent review of all outstanding applications, giving a binding deadline for resolution, and commit to a timescale for the processing and payment of all such applications in the future?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, we have had some capacity issues within the team that meant a number of funding applications were not fulfilled. Once this was identified we reached out to all Neighbourhood Forums to inform them, to apologise for the inconvenience and to work with them identifying gaps and rectify this issue subsequently.</p> <p>The CIL team have recently undertaken significant recruitment and have created an additional role to ensure the efficient running of internal and external processes. The team continue to work with Forums on this and other funding matters, and new internal processes will ensure that this issue will not arise in the future.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Forums should reach out to me directly if they experience delays with CIL payments in future.</p>

LU7: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Upton – Local Plan 2040**Question**

Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on the timetable for the revision of the failed Local Plan 2040 and when Councillors can expect to see the revised version presented to Council for review?

Written Response

Since receiving the Inspectors' letter, officers have been taking legal advice and are considering the options for the next steps to securing a new Local Plan. An item has been added to the Forward Plan indicating that a report with recommendations on the next steps will go to the January cycle of Cabinet and Council.

LU8: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Upton – Local Plan 2040**Question**

Can the Councillor explain what planning regime will operate in Oxford if the Local Plan 2040 is not adopted by the end of 2025?

Written Response

There is no requirement to review a Local Plan to assess if it is out of date until 5 years after adoption - this will be in 2025 for the 2036 Plan. After that point an adopted local plan will not be considered out of date if it can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and has delivered at least 75% of its housing requirement over the last three years. We would also need to assess whether the other policies are out of date by virtue of a significant change in circumstances or in government policy.

In 2025 there will still be 11 years left on the adopted Local Plan and subject to the tests mentioned above it will retain its function and status until it is replaced by a new Local Plan. We anticipate that the 2036 Local Plan will continue to be suitable for determining planning applications in accordance with the adopted spatial strategy.

LU9: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Upton – Botley Bridge Support Update

<p>Question</p> <p>Botley bridge previously informed the reason for the delay for confidentiality was Network Rail wanted to improve services for the public. Apart from the existing shuttle services i am not aware of any additional support for resident s or businesses. Can you inform council of the additional support in place network rail provided?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>This is a Network Rail project. We continue to push them to ensure they maximise support for local businesses and residents. However, the local authority responsible for working with Network Rail to permit and manage the highway network impacts of the scheme is the County Council.</p> <p>The Leader has previously written to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to flag that the works were likely to result in a material change in circumstances for businesses in the area and to ask that applications made by businesses seeking RV reductions were considered thoroughly and sympathetically. Officers are currently preparing a follow-up to this letter given the elongation of the works and the ongoing uncertainties. However, the council cannot make these applications directly they must be made by the businesses to the VOA.</p>
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<p>LU10: From Cllr Rehman to Cllr Upton – Electric Taxi Extension</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>I am awaiting a response in line with Botley bridge being closed for an additional year can representations be made for the additional impact this will cause?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>It is not clear from the question, but I assume Cllr Rehman is referring to the requirement for Hackney Carriages to be fully electric by 2026. The options for extending this were debated by the General Purpose Licensing Committee which then put forward the recommendation to grant a one-year extension for taxi owners to transition to electric vehicles. This recommendation was taken to full council for approval; it was voted on and approved earlier this year.</p> <p>One third of the vehicles have already converted to electric. My view is that we do not want to penalise those owners</p>

	<p>that have already made the investment in line with the initial timelines and the 1-year extension. Any further extensions would undermine confidence in the licensing authority. This confidence is needed for vehicle and business owners to make the investment in new vehicles. If we moved the goalposts again it would not help maintain trust going forward.</p> <p>Servicing costs are now much lower for electric than diesel taxis so they are becoming a more financially attractive move as time goes by.</p>
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LU11: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Upton – Transport Liaison	
<p>Question</p> <p>There are cycle racks along Jowett Walk, with enough spaces for several dozen cycles. OxBikes uses premises within Baliol College and they, no doubt, offer an important service renting out reconditioned cycles. However, it has reached a point where almost all the public cycle racks along JW are taken up with OxBikes cycles, leaving no spaces for local residents and other visitors, which is not fair. I have been told by County Council officers that there is nothing stopping the use of the racks in this way, but also via FixMyStreet that there is an agreement in this case with “The Council”. Is the agreement with the City Council? Can our cabinet members remedy this with an understanding of fair usage, allowing for other cyclists to park on JW?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>I share Cllr Mundy’s frustration and annoyance with public bike racks being filled with privately-owned bicycles. The City Council has invested large sums in increasing the number of bike racks in the city, and they were intended for members of the public to use them.</p> <p>We certainly have not made any agreement with OxBikes to use racks and I believe that the ‘agreement’ referred to on FixMyStreet is simply the contract ODS has to maintain the highways and pavements in the city.</p>

LU12: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Upton – Transport Liaison	
<p>Question</p> <p>The public highway and public cycle stands are sometimes deluged with rental e-bikes, scooters, other bikes for</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The City Council has invested large sums in increasing the number of bike</p>

<p>rent. Potentially hindering public access and use of facilities. There is also unmet need for cycle parking in many places, with the time taken to get new or improved provision delivered taking longer than the lifespan of the average red dwarf. It may, debatably, be a justifiable policy to prioritise bike sharing/ rental over the facilities for other cycles, but is this the position of the cabinet member and the Council?</p>	<p>racks in the city, and they were intended for members of the public to use them. As you allude to, it is a lengthy and expensive process which makes it particularly galling to then find that they are filled up by private hire bikes. Or just as annoyingly, that hire bikes are simply left on pavements where they obstruct people walking.</p> <p>I understand that the County Council, who are in charge of highways, are looking at how they deal with parking hire bikes and scooters. They have asked both e-bike hire companies (Voi and Lime, which each now have 100 e-bikes in the city) to pause any expansion while they audit all existing hire bike parking bays. Let's hope that they find a solution. I would favour on-road parking bays where there is space for them.</p>
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LU13: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Upton – Relocation of Football Pitch	
<p>Question</p> <p>It is vital for the Blackbird community to maintain access to adequate sporting facilities, particularly for youth and grassroots football programs. Where will the replacement pitches be located, and what is the timeline for their availability? Knowing the location and expected completion date of any new facilities will help local teams plan for the future of the local football programs and ensure that players continue to have access to quality playing surfaces.</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The need to reprovide the facilities is set out within the local plan and will be considered when an application is submitted.</p> <p>Work is underway to bring proposals forward, and officers want to do so as soon as practicable, recognising that this is important, not least to allow for forward planning by local teams and players.</p>

LU14: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Bus Services	
<p>Question</p> <p>Given that private school bus services are not competitors to existing bus services, can the portfolio holder explain why they are currently not permitted to run from the park and rides which the</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>When previously considered, it was too high a risk that the additional buses could cause delay and disruption to the park and ride service and as a result it would</p>

<p>City Council owns, and if this approach should be revisited?</p>	<p>require significant management. The Council would need a wider review of Park and Ride management and costs, and I agree that this is a conversation that needs to be had with schools and the County Council who also own Park and Ride sites around the city.</p>
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LU15: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Noise Complaints

<p>Question Can the portfolio holder explain how noise complaints regarding heat pumps and Jacuzzis are handled in the council’s planning policies?</p>	<p>Written Response Noise complaints about heat pumps and Jacuzzis are addressed through the Council’s Planning Policy RE8 and Corporate Enforcement Policy. Policy RE8 requires developments to manage noise to protect amenity and health, including mitigation measures where necessary. Complaints about operational noise are handled under our enforcement policy, which emphasizes proportionate, targeted, and transparent action. This can range from informal resolutions to formal enforcement if compliance cannot be achieved. Early engagement during planning is encouraged to address potential noise issues proactively, ensuring a balance between development needs and residents’ quality of life</p>
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LU16: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Solar Panels Planning Permission

<p>Question Can the portfolio holder explain the council’s current policies with regards to granting planning permission for solar panels in schools?</p>	<p>Written Response The Council will consider any application for development in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan. There is not a specific policy that deals with the installation of solar panels on school buildings. We would consider any application that comes forward on their own merits, and we support proposals</p>
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	<p>that seek to improve energy efficiency.</p> <p>It should be noted that there are permitted development rights available for the installation of solar panels on non-domestic buildings. Moreover in the case of schools, many are county council owned, which means that the county would be the determining authority for applications on their own land.</p>
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LU17: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton– Scheme and Improvements	
Question	Written Response
<p>The Planning report accompanying the application for Newman Place states “The former playing field on the Newman Place site should be re-provided within the scheme of towards facilities elsewhere”. Can the portfolio holder explain how the scheme was re-provided in the area and which facilities in Littlemore were improved? Or did the improvements go elsewhere in the city to the detriment of Littlemore?</p>	<p>Assuming that you mean the Catalyst scheme on Armstrong Road, the committee report for the original outline application for the residential development at Armstrong Road (14/02940/OUT) secured a £50,000 contribution towards improving facilities elsewhere. This was on the grounds that there was no other suitable area in the locality where a cricket pitch (which the former playing field was used for) could be re-provided. Therefore, a contribution was sought which was linked to general leisure and sports provision in the wider surrounding area.</p> <p>The financial contribution from this development was recently passed to Littlemore Parish Council for them to use towards the renewal of the lease of the Oxford Road open space / leisure ground.</p>

LU18: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton – Report Availability	
Question	Written Response
<p>Armstrong Road development 14/02940: In the biodiversity offsetting report and</p>	<p>The question relates to a planning application, and as such any documents</p>

LU18: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton – Report Availability

retile method statement the appraisal states that the Littlemore Brooke is of importance and in close proximity to the Iffley Meadows site of scientific interest. The report states that the area has the potential for otters’ bats and water voles present in Littlemore Brooke, and that a more detailed report at reserved matters will be undertaken. Will the portfolio holder make this report available?

submitted are publicly available on the Council's planning website under the relevant application reference.

<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/planning-applications/view-comment-track-planning-applications>

LU19: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton – Itemised CIL Spend**Question**

The Newman Place development was liable for a CIL charge. The County Council requested that CIL charges for the development be spent on non-transport infrastructure priorities including extensions to the existing primary, secondary and 6th form schools, special needs accommodation, ad improvements to the Westgate library, early intervention centres, children’s centres and elderly day centres. And funding for the replacement and re-phasing of the traffic signals at Littlemore Roundabout (A4142). Actually, how was CIL spent? Can I have an itemised account of the CIL spend?

Written Response

CIL receipts are not disaggregated into individual receipts from each application. Instead, 70-80% are put into a strategic infrastructure fund, a small amount is spent on administration and the remainder is spent on neighbourhood infrastructure as guided by ward members, or in this case, Littlemore Parish Council.

Where specific infrastructure is required to make an application acceptable in planning terms, this is normally requested as a direct ‘Section106’ contribution. As and when other projects come forward the County Council can make a bid for the use of CIL in line with this Council’s capital projects approval process.

LU20: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton – Development Funds**Question**

Why is the cities 106 development funds being spent on the Cowley Branch Line, when transportation is the responsibility of the County Council?

Written Response

The £206k of Section 106 funds being used to fund the Full Business Case for the Cowley Branch Line are those that sit with the County Council, not the City Council. This is supported by a funding agreement between the two authorities.

	<p>The amounts contributed by each funder is set out in para 17 of the relevant cabinet report and the rationale for public sector contributions is set out in para 19 and 30 of the same report.</p>
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LU21: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton – Parking Fees and UK Competition Law	
<p>Question</p> <p>CPZs will be introduced to Rose Hill and Littlemore where 90% of the surveyed residents don't want one. Could the council write to the competition and Markets Authority, asking them to investigate whether forcing residents to pay for parking they don't want is in line with UK competition law?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Cllr Henwood appears to have pre-judged the County Council decision on the North Littlemore CPZ, which will not be taken until December 12th.</p> <p>A Rose Hill CPZ that includes the shops on Rose Hill (but not the Oval) was approved on November 14th. However, the vast majority of the Rose Hill estate is not included in the CPZ.</p> <p>I'm afraid I have no idea why Cllr Henwood feels that competition law is relevant here and I will not be writing to the CMA.</p>

LU22: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Upton – Recent Littlemore Developments	
<p>Question</p> <p>How much section 106 revenues have the following developments in Littlemore produced in recent years? Please add to the list any further developments I may have omitted. I also ask for a breakdown of where it has been spent and what on?</p> <p>Lanham Way Development</p> <p>Barberi Close Development</p> <p>Pipley Furlong Development</p> <p>Denny Gardens Development</p> <p>St Georges Manor & Mandlebrote Drive Development</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Section 106 agreements entered into each year are detailed in the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) published on our website, starting in the year 2020. The next IFS is being taken to December Cabinet for approval to publish.</p> <p>If you are unable to find the information that you need in the IFS then please do come back to me and I will ask officers to prepare a list for you.</p>

<p>Newman Place Development</p> <p>Mogridge Drive Development</p> <p>Railway Lane Development</p> <p>Medhurst Way Development</p> <p>Lanham Way Development</p> <p>Astrop Lane Development</p> <p>David Nicholls Close Development</p> <p>Lawn Upton Close Development</p> <p>Lake field Road Development</p> <p>Northfield House Development</p> <p>Dominion Oil Development(off Railway Lane)</p> <p>Kassam Industrial estate Developments</p> <p>Ellison Institute Science Development</p> <p>Eastpoint Science Park Development</p>	
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LU23: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Upton – Local Plans 2036 and 2040	
Question	Written Response
<p>Local plans 2036 and 2040 emphasise the importance of strong local facilities to meet targets around stronger communities and tackling the climate emergency whilst acknowledging that the city is starkly divided with parts of the city such as Northfield brook being poorly served and hence residents suffering with a huge discrepancy in healthy life expectancy compared to north oxford. What plans are there for extra provisions such as reasonable value eateries, a regular fruit and veg market, extra provision for GP services, schools and provision of well maintained footpaths and cycle paths with the extra housing and residents planned? Without the above, the living conditions of current residents will worsen with the completion of planned much needed housing.</p>	<p>Addressing inequalities is a key theme of the Local Plans. Planning can have a role through the choices made in setting planning policies, for example, by requiring a high proportion of affordable housing and securing community benefits such as footpaths and cycle paths through planning applications. City planners also work with service providers such as the County Council and the ICB to plan for and facilitate the development of schools and healthcare facilities. The other facilities listed in the question would all be supported in principle through the policies of the Local Plan but would be dependent on an applicant wishing to develop such premises. Planning policies cannot themselves</p>

	<p>deliver services and facilities, but they can set the vision and encourage such developments.</p>
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<p>LU24: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Upton – £500,000 Leisure Expenditure</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The legal agreement for Newman Place states that “there will be a financial contribution of £500,000 towards general sports and leisure facilities within Littlemore”. Can the portfolio holder explain how the £500,000 was spent in Littlemore to improve leisure facilities?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Apart from the gross inaccuracy in the number in the question - it was £50,000, not £500,000, that was secured by the City Council for Littlemore facilities – I can confirm that £50k was recently sent to Littlemore Parish Council to use on the sports facility at Oxford Road in Littlemore. If Cllr Henwood requires more details I suggest that he contacts Littlemore Parish Council, which should be relatively simple since he is a Littlemore Parish Councillor.</p>

<p>LU25: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Upton – Food hygiene</p>
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Question	Written Response
<p>Recent news on food hygiene ratings has suggested that some businesses may have incorrectly displayed superior ratings. Do we have data on establishments that have incorrectly displayed a food hygiene rating and how is the Council communicating with potential problem food premises?</p>	<p>The Council does not hold data on businesses displaying incorrect food hygiene ratings. During inspections, officers check displayed ratings and request the removal of any incorrect stickers. Customers can verify accurate ratings online at the Food Standards Agency's website.</p> <p>Most food businesses in Oxford have a 'very good' rating (FHRS 5), and errors are rare, usually occurring when a business is downgraded, but the old sticker remains in place. Serious issues, such as closures, are addressed immediately by officers, while minor downgrades rely on businesses removing old stickers as instructed.</p> <p>Over the past year, the Council received one complaint about an incorrect rating, which was resolved through re-inspection.</p>