

To: Council

Date: 13 February 2025

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Address from Josie Procter – support for amendment to budget on playground in the City Centre

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

1. Address from Josie Procter – Support for Amendment to Budget on Playground in the City Centre

A few months back, you were kind enough to listen to me, on behalf of Oxplay, bringing you a petition on the subject of a playground in Oxford City centre. I said that Oxford didn't have much-needed play space for children, and that driving footfall to the city centre would be good for families, and good for businesses.

We'd taken the petition to County Council, who also supported it, and want to work with City on providing space for the playground.

The petition was put to a vote, and you unanimously voted to support moving forward with a playground, knowing at the time there was no obvious funding source.

Now, no one expected the council to immediately magic up funds for a playground, but imagine our surprise when we saw no mention of any funds in the budget for even the

smallest amount of development work... If we are all agreed that we want to build a playground, and invest in a family friendly city centre, then we need to find a small amount of funding, along with officer time which we wouldn't necessarily see in a budget, to inch it forward. We can only hope that Rachel Reeves' announcement of a Growth Corridor will conjure up a magic money tree, and indeed population growth implies more children. But growth happens in decades and our children are growing up now. Before the impact of that growth commission becomes clear, we need to keep the project moving forward rather than stagnate for a year.

This is why I urge you to both to support the amendment on it and continue your work with the county council to make this a reality. Thank you