

## **Minutes of a meeting of Council on Monday 26 January 2026**

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### **Council members present:**

Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Arshad
Councillor Azad	Councillor Brown
Councillor Chapman	Councillor Clarkson
Councillor Corais	Councillor Diggins
Councillor Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Fouweather
Councillor Fry	Councillor Gant (Sheriff)
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Jarvis	Councillor Jupp
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Malik	Councillor Miles
Councillor Max Morris	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Powell
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Qayyum
Councillor Railton	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Regisford	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Robinson	Councillor Rowley (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Stares	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Snowton
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Waite
Councillor Yeatman	

### **Also present for all or part of the meeting:**

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hook, Deputy Chief Executive - Citizen and City Services

Emma Jackman, Director of Law, Governance and Strategy  
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Uswah Khan, Committee and Member Services Officer  
David Butler, Director of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Natalie Dobraszcyk, Development Management Team Leader  
Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy)  
Rachel Williams, Planning Policy and Place Manager

## **75. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Latif, Sandelson and Harley sent their apologies.

## **76. Declarations of interest**

Councillors Brown, Smith, Turner, Munkonge and Chapman made a declaration of interest that they were all members of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) for Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL) who own the Meadow Lane land and stated that they did not have a conflict of interest and considered themselves to take the wider public interests to this matter.

Councillor Upton made a declaration that she was previously a member of the SJVG a few years ago, but she had never taken any decisions with respect to the site.

Councillor Hollingsworth stated that he was not on the SJVG for OCHL, but he was part of the SJVG when the current landowner acquired the site but had no part in the decision. He stated he would be coming to the Local Plan debate as a Cabinet Member for Planning with an open mind.

## **77. Minutes**

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 24 November 2025 and the Special meeting of Council on 14 January 2026.

## **78. Appointment to Committees**

There were no new appointments to committees.

## **79. Announcements**

**The Lord Mayor** informed Council that she had attended the Saraswati Puja Festival, where many children experienced their first writing ceremony and families

came together from across the community. She also highlighted the Kilsby Boat project, which had received a significant lottery grant to restore canal boat that would be converted into a theatre and educational space.

**The Leader of the Council** updated Council on the response to the current consultation being conducted by Oxford Fire and Rescue on the fire service in Oxfordshire. She said this was timely, as she had received a letter that morning from the University of Oxford expressing serious concerns which aligned with the Councils. Councillor Brown explained that she and Councillor Arshad recently met with Rob McDougall, Oxford's Chief Fire Officer, to discuss the county proposals for the future of fire services in the city. Although this allowed them to ask questions directly, she did not find the meeting reassuring. She reminded members that the proposals included lengthening response times and potentially removing Rewley Road and Kidlington fire stations, replacing them with one in North Oxford. She outlined the main points of the response submitted to the consultation, emphasising that Oxford had a significantly different risk profile from the rest of the county and that this needed to be reflected in service provision. She highlighted the city's population, large student community, concentration of HMOs, high-rise buildings, major hospitals, world heritage sites and increasing levels of lab spaces, all of which added complexity and access challenges. She stressed that these factors required current resources and response times to be maintained. She stated that a centrally located fire station should be retained unless there was clear evidence of service improvement, which she said was lacking. Councillor Brown also raised concerns about the city's waterways, noting several tragic deaths in recent years and expressed concern that some of the expertise from Rewley Road and Kidlington could be broken up and spread thinly around the county. She criticised the lack of proper consideration given to the community impact report, noting that the EQIA identified negative impacts on Oxford's communities but failed to mitigate them. She stated that the proposals ignored deprivation as a key risk factor, despite evidence that all of the county's most deprived areas were urban and that deprivation increased the risk of fire fatalities. She also highlighted that the EQIA identified a disproportionate impact on non-white British communities in Oxford, justifying this on the basis that ethnicity had not been considered a risk factor regarding accidental dwelling fires. She added that on-call requirement appeared to underpin many of the proposals, yet it was unclear what work had been done to address recruitment challenges. She noted that Council had made representations to the consultation. Stressing the need for formal engagement with all majority stakeholders, including Oxford's education establishments. Furthermore, Councillor Brown added that colleges had only recently become aware of the proposals and were extremely concerned and that the university had now submitted a formal response. She also criticised the consultation survey as difficult to follow and leading respondents towards preferred options. Finally, she said that future growth plans and strategic authority changes should be considered when deciding the future of Oxford's Fire and Rescue Service. She concluded that Council did not support any reduction in resources for the city, stating that response times and service levels should be maintained or improved.

**The City Rector** noted that it marked the 100th anniversary of John Logie Baird's first display of television in 1926. He reflected on whether television had been a blessing or a curse, suggesting it depended on how it was used. He said this applied to most inventions and questioned whether procedures chose to build

people up or put them down. He thanked Council for their efforts to build up communities and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

## **80. Public addresses that relate to matters for decision at this meeting**

Council heard 2 addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses. Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin
2. Address from Martin Reed

## **81. Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

## **82. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2026/27**

The Group Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to show the outcome of Oxford City Council's annual rent review and associated rent setting proposal for 2026/27 in respect of all Council dwellings within the Housing Revenue Account, including the setting of associated services and facilities charges.

Councillor Linda Smith introduced the report, acknowledging the ongoing cost of living crisis but stated that reducing rent prices was not feasible. The housing revenue account business plan required maximising the income to fund investments in Council properties, repairs, landlord services and new homes. Councillor Smith stated that she was pleased that the government indicated it would allow Council landlords to move toward rent convergence, noting that long term tenants had paid less than newer ones due to past calculation methods. She noted that the report agreed to increase the legacy rents by up to £2 a week in addition to the 4.8% rise.

Councillor Snowton asked why there had been a decrease in temporary accommodation charges in paragraph 32 of the report. Councillor Smith explained that lower than expected energy costs created a surplus, allowing a reduction in energy charges for temporary accommodation to reflect actual costs.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** an increase of 4.8% + up to £2 for rent convergence (max) for 2026/27 (subject to any subsequent cap on increases imposed by central government) in social dwelling rents from 1st April 2026 giving an average weekly increase of £8.47 per week, and a revised weekly average social rent of £143.40 as set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.
2. **Approve** an increase to rents for shared ownership dwellings as outlined in paragraph 21 of the Financial Implications.
3. **Approve** an increase to service charges by 4.8% (CPI + 1%) to enable the HRA to recover the associated cost of supply.
4. **Approve** an increase to the charge for a garage of 5.0%, equating to an increase of £1.00 per week for a standard garage within a curtilage with a revised charge of £21.00 per week.
5. **Approve** an increase to the rent and service charges for General Fund Temporary Accommodation as set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.

### **83. Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy**

The Director of Housing submitted a report to recommend approval of the updated new Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

Councillor Smith introduced the report, explaining that as a housing authority, Council had a duty to publish the tenancy strategy outlining requirements and expectations for all registered social housing providers. She noted that social landlords were required to publish a tenancy policy to ensure compliance with the citywide strategy. The core principles of the new strategy remained consistent with the council's long-standing approach, emphasising secure or assured social tenancies at social rent where possible, or affordable rents at local housing allowance levels, typically 60%, of market rent rather than 80% used nationally. Support for tenants was expected from social landlords, with the strategy placing greater emphasis on cooperation and action to address homelessness, domestic abuse and antisocial behaviour. Councillor Smith also mentioned that housing associations were expected to collaborate with the Council to optimise property use through the shared register for affordable housing. Proper procedures were to be in place to assist tenants who were overcrowded, living in unsuitable housing or seeking to downsize. The strategy and policy underwent public consultation, focusing on feedback from housing association and Council tenant, which received a positive response.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

#### **Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve and adopt** the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, authority to update the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy with minor amendments to keep the documents

up to date with any future changes in legislation, regulations, governance and best practice.

## **84. Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy**

The Deputy Chief Executive for City and Citizen Services submitted a report to recommend to Full Council to approve the new Resident Involvement & Engagement Strategy 25 – 28.

Councillor Smith introduced the report, explaining the regulator of social housing expected transparency, fairness and respect to access services, raise concern, influence decisions and hold the landlord accountable. She acknowledged the need for improvement in this area. She further stated that a consultation with over 400 residents revealed that the relationship between residents and the Council as a landlord required more focus. Resident involvement ranked second only to building safety among priorities. The tenant satisfaction survey showed only 64% felt listened to by the council. The strategy marked a complete reset, addressing tougher regulatory demands and emphasised resident engagement as central to policy and service delivery. It proposed diverse engagement platforms and support for residents, detailed in the report. Furthermore, Councillor Smith added that strategy was built on four principles, resetting relationships, actively listening, responding to priorities and embedding engagement across the organisation. She stated that it outlined five strategic priorities with action plans such as establishing foundations for engagement, enhancing resident knowledge, co-designing inclusive platforms, improving communication and delivering high-quality landlord services. Initiatives included staff and resident training, improving complaint handling and ensuring services reflected resident input with transparent measurable outcomes. Councillor Smith noted that success would be tracked through participation rates, diversity of involvement and impact of resident feedback on services. Achievements and improvements in satisfaction and service quality would be communicated regularly with an annual strategy review.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

### **Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve and adopt** the Resident Involvement & Engagement Strategy 25 – 28 and action plan attached to the strategy which outlines how the priorities for resident involvement and engagement will be taken forward.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Housing, on approval of the strategy, to put in place the necessary governance and monitoring arrangements to oversee the implementation and delivery of the strategy.

## **85. Proposed Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045**

Council considered the report from the Director of Planning and Regulation seeking approval for the Oxford Local Plan 2045 for public consultation and approve it for consultation and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, if no matters are raised that materially impact upon the Plan strategy, submit the Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

Councillor Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture, introduced the report. He began by thanking the Planning Policy team for their efforts and help with producing the plan in short notice.

For the Green Group amendments, Councillor Hollingsworth accepted the following amendments:

- Amendment 1: Securing more sites for Boat Dwellers - In the Policy Context for H11, add the following new bullet point: “The City Council welcomes opportunities for the establishment of new moorings and will produce further planning guidance for those seeking to deliver new moorings in the City”,
- Amendment 2B: An Oxford Living Wage for apprentices - In Policy E3, at bullet point f), add “although this is encouraged where possible”, after “other than apprentices” so that it reads: “f) Paying all employees (other than apprentices, although this is encouraged) the Oxford Living Wage”,
- Amendment 2C: The Oxford Living Wage as a minimum standard - In Policy E3, remove or “other social clauses appropriate to the development” in bullet point g),
- Amendment 4: Welcoming community-owned energy projects - In the Policy Context for Policy R1, add the following as a new bullet point: “The development of local renewable energy projects will be especially welcomed where they are community owned or owned by non-profit making organisations”
- Amendment 5A: Promoting community cohesion, health and wellbeing in our communities - In the Policy Context for Policy C1, “Establishments that promote community cohesion, health and wellbeing are particularly welcomed in the city centre, local, and district centres” and,
- Amendment 6: Protecting pubs - In Policy C5, after “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions”, “including pubs”, so that it reads, “Planning permission will not be granted for the loss of existing cultural venues and visitor attractions, including pubs, except in the following circumstances:”.

For the Liberal Democrat Group amendments, Councillor Hollingsworth accepted amendment 3 "Urban Design and Heritage" subheading for the site allocation policy SPN1: Diamond Place and Ewert House: "Public toilet facilities are currently located on the site. Development proposals should demonstrate how these facilities will be re-provided or justify an alternative approach".

Councillor Hollingsworth put forward the proposal for Council to endorse the recommendation.

The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Brown.

Council received amendments to the draft Local Plan 2040 that were submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules. The following records the decision reached on each proposed amendment.

For the Green Group, Councillor Rawle, on being seconded by Councillor Muddiman, proposed an amendment as follows: amendment 3a, preventing the loss of playground space. In Policy G1, insert after “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of “, “playground space or”, so that it reads: “Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of playground space or other green infrastructure features such as hedges or ponds where this would have a significant adverse impact upon public amenity or ecological interest.

Additionally, amendment 3b, encouraging the provision of a City Centre playground. In the Policy Context for Policy G1, include a new bullet point: “The City Centre has a deficit of high quality, accessible playgrounds and the Council will welcome applications that seek to resolve or contribute to the resolving of, this deficit.”

On being put to the vote, amendment 3a was lost and amendment 3b was **carried**.

For the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Snowton, on being seconded by Councillor Fouweather, proposed an amendment as follows: the amendment regarding the quality of cycle parking provision for which it cites out to LTN120 with regard to the physical design of cycle parking. There are four categories, C1 hotels, junior schools, senior schools and other educational establishments.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **carried**.

*The Council was temporarily adjourned.*

The Head of Planning and Regulatory Services updated Council on officers advice, stating that all sites proposed for allocation have been assessed against the overall strategy of the plan. Those sites where development fits within the strategy have been proposed for allocation. This is particularly important where we have a housing crisis,

substantial unmet housing need and are reliant on neighbouring authorities to help us meet this. This advice would be the same no matter which site was being proposed for removal at this stage.

Whilst removal of an individual site is unlikely to render the Plan unsound in of itself, its removal would not be consistent with the strategy of the Plan and its approach to all other sites. We need to be able to demonstrate that we have assessed and found all available capacity with the city and this amendment would be contrary to this. Officers recommendation is that this amendment would treat one specific site as an exception to the process used and that this inconsistency could undermine the Plan.

For the Independent Oxford Alliance Group, Councillor Henwood, on being seconded by Councillor Malik, proposed an amendment as follows: withdrawal of the policy SPS8: Land at Meadow Lane from the Local Plan, thereby removing the Horse Fields as a designated housing site.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **lost**.

Council voted to defer the items 22, 23 and 24 to the next meeting and agreed to hear the public addresses before concluding the debate on the Local Plan.

Following debate and on being put to the vote, the recommendations were agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan 2045 document, as amended, for public consultation;
2. **Authorise** all the supporting statutory documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), Policies Map and Equalities Impact Assessment;
3. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to make any necessary minor editorial corrections to the Submission Draft Oxford Local Plan 2045, IDP, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment, Policies Map, and to agree the supporting evidence base prior to going out to consultation.
4. **Authorise**, following publication, the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to make any minor changes to the document deemed necessary as a result of the consultation.
5. **Authorise** submission of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 to the Secretary of State for examination, following Regulation 19 consultation and any minor amendments made according to recommendation 3 or 4 and subject to there being no matters raised in the consultation that are considered to materially impact upon the Plan strategy.
6. **Authorise** the Director of Planning and Regulation, after consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member, to invite the examining inspector(s) to recommend any

modifications considered to be necessary in accordance with section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

## **86. Public addresses that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting**

Council heard 4 addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses. Both addresses and responses are set out in full in the minutes pack.

1. Address from Shavonne Allen
2. Address from Kaddy Beck
3. Address from Chaka Artwell
4. Address from Dan Glazebrook

## **87. Designation of Section 151 Officer**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to designate the Council's Section 151 Officer following a success recruitment campaign and the recommendation from the Appointments Committee on 28 November 2025.

Councillor Brown introduced and summarised the report, stating that the Section 151 Officer Nigel Kennedy was taking retirement at the end of this Council year and Alister Rush, Interim Group Finance Director, needed to be formally appointed as the Council's Section 151 Officer.

On being seconded by Councillor Smowton, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

### **Council resolved to:**

1. **Designate** the newly appointed Interim Group Finance Director as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

## **88. Appointment of Committees for the remainder of the Council Year 2025/2026**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report for Council to appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the remainder of the Council year 2025-26, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15).

Councillor Brown noted that the report included the latest allocations to committee following the changes in membership of different groups, with the addition that Councillor Jupp would stay on the Audit and Governance Committee which was part of the proportional allocation.

On being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the structure of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's Constitution and set out in Appendix 1: Committee Structure 2025-2026;
2. **Approve** the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in Appendix 2: Political Proportionalities on Council Committees 2026;
3. **Appoint** to committee seats, against the requirements of political proportionality, and the nominations made by political groups, as shown in Appendix 3: Committee Nominations 2026 Revised;
4. **Agree** that all members of Council will form the pool of members able to observe on appeals and some grievances panels in accordance with the Council's policies;

## **89. Working Overseas Policy and Procedure for Staff**

The Head of People submitted a report to seek agreement to implement a new policy and procedure relating to working outside of the United Kingdom.

Councillor Chapman summarised the report, stating that the redraft was now a more pragmatic and enlightened policy than before and moved the report.

On being seconded by Councillor Brown, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the following:
  - a. Working Overseas Policy and Procedure for Employees
  - b. Working Overseas Procedure for Members

## **90. Constitution Updates**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report to seek approval to further amendments to the Constitution.

Councillor Brown introduced and summarised the report, explaining that the changes made the constitution clearer and more consistent. The report updated the items required on the forward plan, made it easier for officers to be aware of upcoming decisions and the processes for making them and clarified who could place items on agendas. Councillor Brown commented that the rationale for a couple of the amendments was not clear and would be amended before publication.

On being seconded by Councillor Snowton, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the updates to the Constitution, as listed in Appendix 1;
2. **Delegate** authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any other consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the changes in appendix 1 to the extent that they have not been identified in the above, provided such changes are purely required as a direct consequence.

## **91. Council and Committee Meetings Programme for May 2026 to May 2028**

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report setting out the programme of Council, committee and other meetings for the whole of the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 Council years.

Councillor Brown proposed the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being seconded by Councillor Jarvis, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

**Council resolved to:**

1. **Approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings from 1 May 2026 to 31 May 2028 attached at Appendix 1;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, in consultation with the political Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme in the event that there is any decision by Council to change the committee structure or committee remits which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for Members.

## 92. Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report explaining the background to the Members' Allowances Scheme and to seek delegated authority for the appointment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider a new Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel will recommend the proposed Scheme to Council later in 2026 for adoption.

Councillor Bown proposed the recommendations as set out in the report and noted that remuneration was decided independently and not by Councillors. She noted that the panel would report their recommendation to Council later in the year.

On being seconded by Councillor Henwood, the recommendations were put to the vote and agreed.

### Council resolved to::

1. **Delegate authority** to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy to make appointments to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel as needed, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, up to when the replacement Members' Allowances Scheme will expire in March 2027.

## 93. Urgent Key Decisions Since July 2025

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report to update Council on key decisions taken in cases of special urgency since 14 July 2025.

Councillor Brown introduced the report.

Councillor Miles noted that at Scrutiny Committee meetings last year, members had recognised a growing trend towards urgent key decisions. Councillor Brown reassured her that decisions coming forward were both key and urgent.

Councillor Fouweather asked whether it had been known in 2023 that the ice rink chillers would not be repairable if they failed and whether an independent report on the chillers had been carried out. Councillor Brown responded that she would provide a written answer but stated that it was an urgent decision and was necessary to ensure the ice rink was functioning. She said she was satisfied it met the criteria for both a key decision and an urgent decision.

### Council resolved to:

1. **Note** the urgent key decisions taken in cases of special urgency as set out in the report

*Councillor Regisford left the meeting.*

#### **94. Questions on Cabinet minutes**

##### **a. Cabinet minutes – 4 December 2025**

No questions were raised.

##### **b. Cabinet minutes – 10 December 2025**

No questions were raised.

##### **c. Cabinet minutes – 21 January 2026**

No questions were raised.

#### **95. Questions on Notice from Members of Council**

24 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 6 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

#### **96. Outside organisation report - Partnership report on the Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board, and the Council's work for Children and Young People living in the city**

Council agreed to defer this item of business to the next meeting.

#### **97. Scrutiny Committee update report**

Council agreed to defer this item of business to the next meeting.

#### **98. Motions on notice January 2026**

Council agreed to defer this item of business to the next meeting.

**99. Better use of Oxpens Bridge Funding (Proposed by Cllr Jupp,  
Seconded by Cllr Miles)**

As Council voted to defer motions on notice, these motions would need to be submitted again for debate.

**100. Prisoners for Palestine hunger strikes (proposed by Cllr Jarvis,  
Seconded by Cllr Mundy)**

As Council voted to defer motions on notice, these motions would need to be submitted again for debate.

**The meeting started 5pm and ended at 9.43pm.**

**Lord Mayor .....**

**Date: Monday 23 February 2026**

*Decisions on items of business take effect immediately:*

*Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation.*

*Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

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**To:** Council

**Date:** 26 January 2026

**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy

**Title of Report:** Public addresses 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 Deborah Glass Woodin
2. Address from Martin Reed

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

### 1. Address from Deborah Glass Woodin

When I arrived in Oxford in the early '90's, one of the first campaigns I was involved in was to oppose the demolition of the dozens of houses on the south side of Botley Rd – you heard right: houses – to make way for the 'out-of-town' retail warehouses. Those very buildings are now being demolished, just 30 years on. To build much needed homes? No, to build tech labs.

Since then, we have seen the expansion of Blackbird Leys, the building of Barton Park. Proposals for or delivery of, housing on precious pockets of open space and local parks – Spindleberry in Blackbird Leys; Bertie Park and Redbridge Meadow in South Oxford and the Horse Fields in Iffley, to name but a few.

The Local Plan has stated clearly over the years that housing will be the priority for this Council. Have we come even close to solving the housing crisis? Hmm...

Yet, acres of brownfield are still identified in this Plan for employment. Maybe housing 'could' go there too. As the Scrutiny committee was told last week. But it should be designated for housing?

Because this City and this County, is not short of jobs, quite the opposite. And it is blessed with full employment.

It is short on housing. Homes fit for the future, at prices local residents can afford. It is also short on local parks, play spaces and nature.

The wealth inequalities in this City aren't because there are hundreds of people looking for work. They are because people don't earn enough in the jobs they do.

Because if you can't afford your rent or mortgage payments, or find somewhere affordable to live, everything else suffers. As it does if you can't easily access open green space and nature.

But just playing the housing numbers game won't solve this problem – as we've seen for the last 30 years. The building of 250 homes, for e.g., on the Wolvercote Paper Mill site was great – if you had upwards of £1/2m to spare to buy one. You're unlikely to find Oxford teachers, nurses and lab technicians living there.

And where is the data, that should be informing the discussion today:

- What is the proposed balance between new jobs (on the one hand) & new housing & green spaces in the city (on the other) & how has this been reached?

In particular, has any of the land previously identified for employment-use been firmly re-allocated for housing? This was a promised policy change around a common theme in many responses in previous consultations. If the plan continues to prioritise a huge increase in employment and economic growth over better provision for housing for the existing population's needs, then Oxford's housing crisis will continue to worsen, as will the related infrastructure issues including flooding, sewage, water scarcity, congestion, pollution and loss of green space.

How can the 'more of the same' strategy this Plan contains, that created and exacerbated these very real challenges we need to solve – result in anything other than more of the same?

- where is the summary report of responses to the last consultation, that should have informed this stage and the explanation of changes made in light of that consultation or the reasons for ignoring it. That information needs to be provided before the plan can properly be considered. The lack of its availability once again undermines democratic process in this City. It reinforces residents' feelings that 'there's no point in participating, no-one listens' and undermining the stated corporate priority to support thriving communities.

And finally, how can you possibly be expected to give full, due consideration to this 900 page document in the time given? The fact that the summary of the responses to the previous consultation is proving to also be very long is simply not a good enough reason not to provide it, but rather suggests more time and attention needs to be given to this entire process. What's the rush?

Be visionary. Be creative. Be courageous. It is in your gift to request more time, or dare I suggest, a different, more democratically-generated Plan, that is genuinely fit for the future this City and its current residents.

**Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture**

The draft Local Plan 2045 does not prioritise employment over housing. It does not add any new employment sites; instead it seeks to ensure that the use of existing employment sites is intensified, in line with the NPPF and Government guidance. The draft Local Plan sets out in Policy E1 the employment strategy for the city which aims to meet the city's employment needs while also facilitating the delivery of much needed housing.

Both the current 2036 Local Plan and the proposed 2045 Local Plan make residential development possible – other planning policies such as flood zones and the like permitting – on every employment site in Oxford. The 2045 Local Plan indeed goes further, and allows for complete loss of a greater number of employment sites than the 2036 Local Plan

A Local Plan cannot force the owner of a particular site to remove their office or their factory and build housing instead. But it can make it clear that that option is available to them, and the current Local Plan and the proposed Local Plan do exactly that.

The Wolvercote Paper Mill site includes 95 units of affordable housing, of which 75 are social housing, the most affordable form of housing available, and the rest are shared ownership. This provides homes that are genuinely affordable to families of all ages, backgrounds and employment.

## 2. Address from Martin Reed

We are here to request that you remove Policy SPS8 Land at Meadow Lane from the draft new Local Plan and make the **full 2.5 acres** available as a local resource for outdoor education and nature connection, with the opportunity of a Heritage Lottery grant, to benefit children and young people and the future resilience of the city.

This ancient meadow is unsuitable for **any** housing:

It is now included in Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy and easily qualifies as a City Wildlife Site. It provides the beautiful rural setting for Iffley's Conservation Area and draws many residents and visitors along the quiet route for active travel bordering the meadow. The value it brings, environmentally, socially and economically, is reflected in the Council's own multifunctionality scoring system, where it would score 13 /17 and it should be protected as Core Green infrastructure.

This particularly sensitive site is identified by the Council's own surveys as unsustainable. With 15 constraints in the Sustainability Appraisal (which is an underestimate, given all the errors and omissions) is the most constrained of any SPS site in this Local Plan. In particular, the site policy fails to recognise that the meadow itself is an essential part of the rural Conservation area and any building here would cause significant harm to the Conservation Area and fail to meet the heritage requirements of the NPPF.

The reduction in the minimum housing number from 29 to effectively ZERO confirms the site is **wholly unsuitable for any housing**. Keeping SPS 8 risks the **soundness of the entire plan**.

The Council needs to get the balance right: the benefits of any housing here would be far outweighed by the multiple harms of any development on this irreplaceable site.

I was born in Iffley and have wonderful memories of childhood. I grew up surrounded by open fields.

I believe a Meadow School on the Horse Fields would bring all the things I enjoyed in my childhood. The teachers from local schools within walking distance of the Horse Fields say this too, with benefits to:

1. mental and physical health
2. learning, social and practical skills and job opportunities
3. Connection between children and communities of different background
4. A feeling of belonging in the local landscape

They also say that it would address the high levels of disadvantage of the children in their catchment areas.

I am who I am because of the childhood experiences I had in nature.

The fields allowed me to be a child, unjudged by adults. I made camps, climbed trees, played games, and explored. I saw birds' nests with eggs in, watched ants' nests. I ran freely racing and laughing with other children of all backgrounds. We appreciated nature and were healthy and happy. We weren't Vitamin D deficient!

As a result of enjoying the outside, I have made lifelong friends.

I attribute my health to early physical activity.

I return mentally to these places that no longer exist, when I need space and peace and wish to remember these lovely times.

I still get artistic inspiration from childhood visions of these places and from the birds and animals I saw, which formed my early imagination.

I became a professional gardener as a result of enjoying the outside.

I was lucky: virtually everything apart from the Horse Fields has now gone.

I feel every child should have the opportunities I did.

The size of the Horse Fields meadow is **just large enough** at 2.5 acres to take managed footfall while protecting and nurturing the wildlife here.

And now we have the support from the local wildlife trust to make this a reality.

BBOWT are leading the submission of Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and the Ray (which we call RBOR), a £4.1 million National Lottery Heritage Fund bid with 12 partners across the landscape between Oxford, Bicester, Aylesbury. Our focus is nature, communities, and heritage, with a specific focus on reconnection, which aligns perfectly with the Meadow School Iffley proposal.

We are working with the organising committee of FOFI to pilot Meadow School sessions with Greyfriars Catholic School and draw up a proposal for working with them for our bid. Should our bid be successful, we can offer some funds to set-up and run the Meadow School, extra capacity, and expertise from our twelve partners and wider RBOR stakeholder network.

We are very excited to be involved in supporting the development of the meadow school, and are confident in FOFI's commitment and ability to develop a brilliant community resource that will last long after our five-year funding is up.

### **Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture**

Delivery of housing is a priority for the City Council, and the Local Plan's strategy is to maximise housing delivery while balancing protection of other important assets such as biodiversity, open space and functional floodplain. The minimum housing need figure for Oxford has been calculated by using the Government's Standard Method as set out in National Planning Policy and guidance. The housing need in Oxford is for 1,087 new dwellings per annum over 20 years, a total of 21,740. This housing need is clearly greater than the capacity of the city to deliver it. The assessment of capacity (set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2026) is 9,267 homes over the Local Plan period, or 463 dwellings per annum, meaning that there is an unmet housing need of well over 10,000 dwellings, which this Council will need to look towards our neighbouring District Councils to meet, as before. It is therefore a clear requirements that the Local Plan identify all viable housing sites to contribute towards meeting the housing need within the City's boundaries.

The Meadow Lane site has been an allocated site for residential development since the adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and it is proposed that this continue to be the case for the Local Plan 2045. The sensitivity of the site is acknowledged in the draft allocation policy, including its siting within the designated Iffley Conservation Area and within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) But there is considered to be potential for a scheme that responds appropriately to this setting which delivering much needed housing. This site allocation was drafted with reference to the LNRS. The LNRS is not identified in the draft policy as having the intention of preventing development. The LNRS itself makes this clear: "In these circumstances [where allocations for alternative uses overlap with the mapped extent of the LNRS], Local Planning Authorities should seek to plan positively for the delivery of the potential measures identified in the LNRS within the proposed development..."

In relation to the impact on the Conservation Area, it is entirely acceptable and commonplace for development to occur within conservation areas, especially in historic cities such as Oxford. The principal of developing within a conservation area is acceptable; whether proposals result in harm to heritage assets is something that can only be properly assessed by Development Management officers when a planning application is submitted.

The site did not meet the criteria to be part of the Core Green Infrastructure Network. Although the site is within a conservation area, this in itself does not make it part of the core network. It is not a designated wildlife site, there is only a small area of flood risk, and it appears separated from the main green corridor, which is likely to limit its main corridor function.

When considering whether to allocate a site, officers have considered what the capacity of the site is for housing delivery; a process that was informed by the most up-to-date information available at the time of drafting. It is clear that the site has sensitivities and biodiversity interest, but there is still potential for a development of the site that responds to this appropriately. Given the current understanding of the wildlife value of the site the minimum number of dwellings has been removed from the site allocation policy, allowing a free response to the sensitivities of the site. That is not to

say a scheme bringing forward the previous minimum would not be suitable, but leaves that to be determined in the decision making process for a planning application on the site.

**To: Council**

**Date: 26 January 2026**

**Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy**

**Title of Report: Public addresses that do not 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 put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are 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 to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Shavonne Allen
2. Kaddy Beck
3. Chaka Artwell
4. Dan Glazebrook

## **Addresses to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda**

### **1. Shavonne Allen**

Madam Mayor, Councillors, thank you for hearing me today.

I am here to propose a county-wide Youth Council and Youth Mayor programme. For many centuries, Oxford has been known for its growth and innovation in multiple areas, such as education; however, we currently lack a modern, county-wide youth voice system.

This is why I am proposing today the establishment of a Youth Council and a Youth Mayor programme to enable young people across the county to become politically involved. By launching a Youth Council and a democratically elected Youth Mayor, Oxford would enrich its democracy as a whole.

This initiative would allow passionate individuals to become politically involved by representing the youth of Oxford in their own form of council, while also collaborating with both Oxford City and County Councils on decision-making and sharing their perspectives. This would enhance younger generations' understanding of politics across schools, communities, and alternative provisions throughout Oxford.

It would also allow young people to become involved in the wider community not just the one in which they live, but communities across Oxford as a whole. This would help break down socio-economic imbalances by bringing together young people from different backgrounds.

Oxford would be following the example of modern councils, such as Bristol and Lewisham, which already involve young people in decision-making through the formation of youth councils. By establishing a Youth Council, Oxford would further reflect itself as a diverse, forward-thinking city.

Thank you for hearing me today.

### **Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working**

Thank you so much, we really appreciate you coming and we're so sorry you've had to wait for so long, it doesn't normally take quite that long to come to public speakers, we've had a very busy meeting this evening.

I really welcome your proposals, but I think we probably need to have some further discussions about how to take them forward because you may not be aware, we're in the process of Local Government Reorganisation at the moment which means until July, we don't really know what the future for this Council will be, it won't be this Council as such, we do now that much, there are three proposals on the table. So I think What we would very much like to do, speaking personally, to put some ideas forward for the new Council, whatever that might look like which could include some serious youth representatives as part of that structure going forward. Realistically, it going to be proposals for the new Councils rather than proposals for our existing Council that I think we will need to focus on, so really welcome the start of the conversation, I'm really happy to meet with you and to talk about it further so we can put forward sensible proposals as part of our working which we will be doing over the next two years to out together the proposals for the new Councils.

Thank you very much indeed.

## **2. Kaddy Beck**

I coordinate the campaign to save Bertie Park recreation ground in South Oxford. We have spoken many times about the loss of open space which this development would involve. This time, we'd like to talk about the planning process itself, and highlight objections raised by Thames Valley Police.

You have told us many times you want to build on Bertie Park because it's been on local plans for 20 years. So, we thought it was OK to cut and paste a policy from one plan to another.

When your principal planner said: "For reassurance, a site wouldn't automatically be carried over from one Local Plan to the next but would be subject to a new review of the current planning position and any constraints / opportunities," .... it was a light bulb moment!

The plan policy states “planning permission will only be granted ... if the existing Bertie Place recreation ground, including a replacement Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), is re-provided on land in plot B” behind Wytham Street.

The current plan was submitted in March 2019, but by that November it was already clear you had no intention of re-providing the recreation ground as required. You announced instead: “a smaller but more modern play area which would be open to the public,” the land behind Wytham St was to become “a nicer environment for the community.” I.e. you decided to depart from the plan policy before the current plan was even agreed in June 2020. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that plan policies be both up to date and deliverable. It is obvious that the submitted plan policy for Bertie Park was neither.

Your planning application was validated in May 2023. It normally takes 13 weeks for proposals to reach planning committee. The first date we were given was that August. For 2½ years you have drilled holes and held meetings. This is just such a waste of council tax money.

We have known for a long time that Thames Valley Police thought the land behind Wytham Street unsuitable for unaccompanied children. They have now officially submitted their advice.

The police say:

“Site B does not have any clear function or purpose, and significantly lacks surveillance, creating significant concern that there will be opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour to flourish in this area... This space is very difficult to activate and is highly likely to be a significant attractor for crime and antisocial behaviour. ...Careful consideration needs to be evidenced how legitimate activities will be promoted in this space and crime/ASB prevented/discouraged. This has not been achieved in the current application.”

They also say:

“The MUGA is located very close to residential properties creating a risk of noise having a negative impact on residents, neighbour disturbances and community tension. This space is a very challenging location for development, with no clear solution. I appreciate the community wish to retain this youth recreation facility, however if houses are to be built here then neither the current location or the previously suggested location in site B are appropriate locations for such a facility.”

The council has not listened to the voices of local residents. We hope that it will listen to the police.

Finally, in October last year, OCC published its Green Spaces Technical Advice note 9. This says if you want to argue that an open space (like Bertie Park) is surplus you would need to “demonstrate a long-term lack of public access and/or use.” You have not done this. It also says that in Oxford, there is no spare pitch capacity, and that, with the population of Oxford growing, if pitches (like our MUGA) are “lost without compensation then so is that opportunity.”

Our recreation ground sits at the heart of our community because it is a physical space where families meet and kids play together. If you build on it, it is gone forever. And so is the heart of our community.

### **Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture**

This site is allocated for development in the current Local Plan 2036, and there is an extant planning application for the site that will be determined in due course by the

Planning Committee, who will need to take into account in reaching their decision the Local Plan and all other relevant material considerations, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 38 (6).

All councillors sitting on the Planning Committee must retain an open mind on all applications to be decided by that Committee, including this application.

### **3. Chaka Artwell**

Does Oxford City Council believe it is right, correct, and just, for illegal migrants, and asylum seekers, are prioritised for housing, and welfare needs, by the Home Office and Local Councils, above native English men and women's housing needs?

#### **Response from Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities**

It is not the case that illegal migrants and asylum seekers are prioritised for housing. Persons from abroad who are claiming asylum are not eligible for inclusion on housing registers when by virtue of their immigration status they are ineligible for an allocation of housing.

Only housing applicants who are eligible and have a qualifying local connection to Oxford (with some exceptions such as domestic abuse survivors and armed forces veterans), will normally qualify for inclusion on our Housing Register and a possible offer of housing.

The Home Office has responsibility for providing accommodation for asylum seekers while their claims are assessed. The previous government stopped processing asylum claims and allowed the number of asylum seekers left in limbo to rise, necessitating the use of asylum hotels, the current Labour government has committed to speed up decisions and end the use of hotels.

As an accredited Local Authority of Sanctuary, the Council has a proud history of supporting households who have settled in Oxford from abroad, including those who have arrived via government back resettlement and visa schemes, with the Council predominantly providing support into private rented accommodation for these groups.

### **4. Dan Glazebrook**

The motion put forward by councillors Jupp and Miles rightly points out what the Friends of Grandpont Nature Park have been saying for some time - that the Oxpens bridge would not provide the floodproof route required for student housing at Osney Mead (rendering it a pointless replication of the existing two bridges in the same area) - and the incredible £14million price tag for the bridge would be far better spent elsewhere. For example - it is surely only a matter of time before there is a serious casualty on the A40 at Barton Park, where there have been several nasty accidents already as residents are forced to dodge speeding traffic every time they want to reach shops, schools or the doctor's surgery. The Council's building of the estate without a bridge or subway was directly counter to both the police's recommendations and County-wide traffic regulations.

Likewise, the lack of a crossing from South to East Oxford at Jackdaw Lane means residents of New Hinksey are forced instead on a long diversion round the Plain, the most dangerous cycling spot in Oxford, where there have already been fatalities. It

would even be useful to have a bridge across the river directly from Osney Mead, to ensure users do not have to cross the flooded towpath under the railway bridge, where a man tragically drowned just last winter. The one place a bridge is not needed is from Grandpont Nature Park to Oxpens Meadow, two sites already linked by an excellent, wide and well-used cycle and foot bridge just 100m from the proposed new one. Yet it seems the Labour Council prefer to use public money to pointlessly augment the private commercial developments of Oxford University than to address the safety and wellbeing of their own constituents.

When the residents of Grandpont and Osney started their campaign in 2024 they were told by a Labour cabinet member that it would not be possible to use Growth Deal funding for projects such as those being put forward today. They were told, quote, that “we couldn’t spend it elsewhere in the city. It can only be spent on infrastructure that enables new development or new housing.” And it is true that this is the usual criteria for projects receiving Oxfordshire Growth Deal funding. But Oxford City Council, unique amongst all the Councils in Oxfordshire, had by then managed to wangle itself an exemption from these criteria. Unlike all the other Councils, the City Council was and is allowed to use Growth Deal funding for projects that do not directly enable new development or new housing. So the funds could have - and can be - used for other projects.

Furthermore, it is now clear that the Oxpens River Bridge as currently conceived does not *itself* enable any new housing or development, whether directly or indirectly. When the bridge went to planning, Council officers were at pains to point out that, quote, “the future developments [at Osney Mead and Oxpens] could go ahead *without* the bridge”, that “The bridge is a standalone development that can be delivered on its own without the need for the Oxpens or Osney Mead allocations to be delivered *and vice versa*”; that “the Osney Mead development could still come forward [without the bridge]”; and that “if the bridge doesn’t go ahead then both the proposed developments [Osney Mead and Oxpens] could come ahead *on their own*.”

There you have it, in black and white: the bridge is not necessary, either for the Oxpens development or for Osney Mead. This is truer than ever since the Environment Agency vetoed the Council’s plans to floodproof the towpath between Osney Mead and Grandpont Nature Park in November 2021. The Council, to this day, don’t have the faintest idea how to floodproof this path, which means that to reach the new floodproof bridge from Osney Mead, users will have to cross a section of towpath that regularly floods - and, where, as I mentioned, someone tragically drowned just last year.

Last time I stood here, the Cabinet Member responsible responded with a long list of outdated documents referring to plans for the bridge. All of these were made redundant by the EA’s ruling in 2021.

The Council are now in breach of Homes England’s funding requirements, which, unlike the Growth Deal, the Council have not wangled an exception from, which state that funds can only be used for infrastructure that unlocks housing developments. The £1.5million they were awarded by that body for the bridge was provided specifically for a path that their application claimed would provide the floodproof exit out of Osney Mead required for residential planning permission to be granted on the site. In fact it will do nothing of the sort. You may, in the coming discussion, seek to ask council leaders how they expect to get millions more from this body for a project which it is not lawfully allowed to fund, as it will not - by their own admission - enable any housing.

Now the Council have diverted a further £3.7million from the local budget for the bridge, including £1million from the maintenance fund, which is supposed to be used to repair council homes. Enough is enough. It’s time to stop throwing good money after bad, and to start addressing the safety and wellbeing of the town’s working class residents rather

than simply subsidising the wealthiest institution in the city with a pointless ornament for their commercial developments.

### **Response from Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture**

This address says: “Last time I stood here, the Cabinet Member responsible responded with a long list of outdated documents referring to plans for the bridge. All of these were made redundant by the EA’s ruling in 2021.”

This is attempting to recreate a claim that was rejected by the Judge in last year’s failed attempt to overturn the planning permission granted for this bridge - that the purpose of the bridge is solely to connect the Oxpens and Osney Mead development sites. This was not the purpose when this bridge was first proposed 20 years ago, and it is still not the case. The documents in question may in some instances have existed for some time, but what they say remains entirely relevant, as the judge made clear in his reference to the 2013 Oxpens SPD, for example.

It may be helpful to remind Council of some of these documents, and what they say, and when they said it. And who supported them at the time. All were consulted on widely and at length, debated in Full Council, and then adopted as formal documents.

**The West End Area Action Plan**, adopted by the City Council in June 2008, sought “A new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Thames to join Oxpens Field to the Thames towpath is proposed. This would link the West End to Osney Mead and the West Oxford Cycle Route. Improvements will also be made to the route running east from the pedestrian bridge.”

This document, with the detail of this bridge being set out in the context and wording of proposed Policy WE2, was finalised by the Executive Board – as the Cabinet was then called – on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007 after four years of public consultation and preparation. It was then approved - complete with this bridge - by a special Full Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007. The then leader of Oxford City Council, Cllr John Goddard, was responsible for the policy and proposed it - complete with this bridge. This Council had the change to oppose the bridge, or to attempt to delete that policy from the plans. The record of the meeting show that no one did so.

When the Council submitted this plan after four years of preparation and consultation to the Government for approval on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2007, the Oxford Mail reported the enthusiasm for the plans – which included this bridge - of Cllr Goddard. He was reported as saying that “there had also been widespread backing within the city” for the plans submitted.

In November 2013 the **Oxpens SPD** was adopted by the City Council. This explains in detail what is proposed and what the objectives are for the new bridge.

“A new bridge crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably the Grandpont Nature Reserve, and residential areas up/down stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan.”

The maps that are the Development Framework Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan in the 2013 **Oxpens SPD** include the proposed bridge in almost exactly the location for which planning permission was submitted and approved.

The other bridges across the Thames will remain. The potential to improve the Gasworks Rail bridge was considered by the County Council in 2016-17 and discounted as a workable option. Further review has highlighted considerable challenges, particularly with the footpath alongside Castle Mill Stream which is too narrow to accommodate cycling and the alternative route over the Castle Mill Stream bridge which would require alterations to create a hardened path and altered levels across the protected Meadow.

This bridge will be delivered entirely by external funding, but this is funding which if not used for the bridge will have to be returned to the different funding bodies. The City Council is not able to reallocate it to other projects. Funding from the Growth Deal for Oxfordshire was allocated to this scheme with the support of both Oxfordshire County Council, the responsible body, and Homes England who provided the funding to the County Council.

The proposed bridge provides the opportunity for a new and convenient route across the river, designed specifically for the location and to support the placemaking that will support the development of the West End as a vibrant quarter of the city and connect to other parts of Oxford to the south and west of the city centre.

These are the objectives now, and they were also the objectives of the bridge first proposed by this Council – and its then Leader and his fellow councillors, of different parties - 20 years ago.

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Appendix 1 – List of Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Part 14 Other Committee Procedures

Paragraph	Current	Change	Reason
<p>14.13 Licensing committee procedures</p> <p>(a) who can put items on licensing agendas?</p>	<p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, The Director of Planning and Regulation and the relevant proper officer and the relevant proper officer can put items on licensing committee and sub-committee agendas.</p>	<p>The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, The Director of Planning and Regulation and the relevant proper officer and the relevant proper officer can put items on licensing committee and sub-committee agendas.</p> <p>Decisions due to be taken by the Committee and recommendations to Council must have appeared on the Forward Plan at least one month before the meeting, unless agreed by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer.</p>	<p>The requirements for the Licensing Committees to add decisions and recommendations to Council to the Forward Plan has been updated. While not a legal requirement, this amendment allows Officers to plan their workstreams ahead of committees and gives members and the public more transparency when decisions are expected at other committees.</p>
<p>14.14 Audit and Governance Committee procedures</p> <p>(a) Who can put items on Audit and Governance Committee agendas?</p>	<p>The Group Finance Director, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, the relevant proper officer and the Council's internal and external auditors can put items on Audit and Governance Committee agendas.</p>	<p>The Group Finance Director, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, the relevant proper officer and the Council's internal and external auditors can put items on Audit and Governance Committee agendas.</p> <p>Decisions and recommendations to Council must have appeared on the Forward Plan at least one month before the meeting, unless agreed by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer..</p>	<p>The requirements for the Audit and Governance Committee to add decisions and recommendations to Council to the Forward Plan has been updated. While not a legal requirement, this amendment allows Officers to plan their workstreams ahead of committees and gives members and the public more transparency when decisions</p>

			are expected at other committees.
14.15 Standards Committee  (a) Who can put items on Standards Committee agendas?	The Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer can put items on Standards Committee agendas.	The Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer can put items on Standards Committee agendas.  Decisions and recommendations to Council must have appeared on the Forward Plan at least one month before the meeting, unless agreed by the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer.	The requirements for the Standards Committee to add decisions and recommendations to Council to the Forward Plan has been updated. While not a legal requirement, this amendment allows Officers to plan their workstreams ahead of committees and gives members and the public more transparency when decisions are expected at other committees.

Part 19 Contract Rules

Paragraph	Current	Change	Reason
19.2 When do these rules apply	For Contracts which are exempted contracts under Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act 2023 (the Act) the following rules will not apply:	Whether under or over the procurement regulatory threshold, for Contracts which are of a description as exempted contracts under Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act 2023 (the Act) the following rules will not apply:	The wording has been updated to reflect the Public Procurement Act 2023, which is the only Act now in force for new Contracts.
19.2 When do these rules apply	Arrangement type The acquisition and disposal or buildings which do not form part of a	Arrangement type The acquisition and disposal or buildings which do not form part of	The wording has been updated to reflect the Public Procurement Act 2023,

	wider transaction under which the Council also procures Supplies, Services or Works	a wider to the extent they fall within Schedule 2 of the Procurement Act	which is the only Act now in force for new Contracts.
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**To:** Council  
**Date:** 26 January 2026  
**Report of:** Director of Law, Governance and Strategy  
**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 and Inclusive Economic Growth; Leader of the Council

### SB1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Brown

#### Question

Do you agree with me that some of the housing sites mentioned in the Oxford Growth Commission interim report, for example at Chalgrove, are neither proximal to employment sites nor to rail connections and are therefore likely to foster more car commuting? Will you robustly defend the need for a reduction in car commuting and resultant congestion to the Commission?

#### Written Response

I warmly welcome the Interim Oxford Growth Commission report and its emphasis on the importance in particular of agglomeration and building housing near the City and/or existing transport hubs. This council's LGR bid for a Greater Oxford is based on the importance of building more housing and employment sites next to existing conurbation and transport links. I welcome Cllr Smowton's support for this proposal and for building housing next to Oxford where it is needed through strategic release of the green belt.

#### Supplementary Question

None.

#### Verbal Response

### SB2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Brown

<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Do you agree with me that while the Oxford Growth Commission interim report's support for rail is welcome, this leans heavily towards the Cowley Branch Line and gives insufficient attention to much-needed new stations at Ardley, Begbroke and Wantage &amp; Grove? Will you represent to the Commission the need to get behind OxRail 2040 in its entirety?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>No, I don't agree with Cllr Smowton. The Interim report is focused on projects that can be delivered effectively and quickly to encourage housing and growth.</p> <p>The Cowley Branch Line (the funding bid for which was led by the City Council) is, alongside Oxford Station, the rail project that will unlock growth quickest. Both these projects are also a pre-requisite for other rail projects across the county. It is right that the report focuses on delivering the branch line first.</p> <p>The interim report also clearly expresses strong support for rail plans and projects throughout, including stating, on page vi and page 9 and page 13 and page 14, that OxRail 2040 is very strong in its entirety, that it should be delivered, and that the commission is going to work to support the delivery of the plan and the Oxfordshire Metro.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>SB3: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Brown</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>What work has been done to identify a location for the city centre play park in the Broad Street and St Giles area since the cross-party support for such a facility?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The city council has expressed its support for a city centre play area in principle. Explicit proposals for such a park on the highway would need to be brought forward by the County Council.</p> <p>The Child Friendly City working group has trialled pop-up children's events at both locations.</p> <p>A report on the outcomes of these events is currently being finalised by the County Council and will include recommendations. Early findings suggest</p>

	<p>that softer surfaces, such as grassed areas away from roads and fast cycle routes, are significantly more conducive to encouraging children's play.</p> <p>As part of this work, the feasibility for permanent play space will be considered as will a decision on whether the City or County Council is best placed to utilise the funds available.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

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

**AR1: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Railton**

**Question**

Inconsiderate and dangerous cycling remains a concern for the users of Florence Park. Is there a log of any complaints or any plans to address concerns?

**Written Response**

There is no record of any complaints other than the communications from the Cllr. There had been an offer from the County Council to provide some signs left over from another project. However, there has subsequently been no responses to numerous attempts to chase this offer.

There is an online form for residents to make comments or complaints here: <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/xfp/form/165>

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

**AR2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton**

<p><b>Question</b> Which park locations have been short listed for the learner cycle park and what criteria have been used to identify the short list?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The short list comprised: Croft Rd Rec, Cutteslowe Park, Florence Park, Milham Ford Park and Sunnymead Rec. This was based off the criteria below (in no particular order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood risk</li> <li>• Safe access by bike (i.e. proximity to key cycling routes, low traffic streets)</li> <li>• Access to car parking (since it would not be reasonable to assume everyone will cycle there and some people will drive)</li> <li>• Access to ancillary facilities like toilets or a cafe</li> <li>• Availability of space in the park</li> </ul> <p>Provision of natural supervision (site lines)</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Miles asked the Cabinet Member if a decision had been taken regarding shortlist for the cycle park?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Railton responded a decision had been taken that they would start by scoping Florence Park and see if they could make planning considerations work there.</p>

<p><b>AR3: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> As the portfolio holder is aware, Manzil Way Gardens played host to a winter wonderland during December. During the course of this event, vehicles caused significant damage to the grass. This compounded the damage already caused by vehicles used by contractors from St Hilda's College. Can the portfolio holder please outline what steps are being taken to ensure that events do not result in unnecessary damage to public spaces?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The main ruts were not caused by the short-term use of the site during the event but by the unauthorised access across the grass area by the St Hildas College maintenance vehicles over several weeks previously. The college now accepts this based on photographic evidence provided and has agreed to undertake restoration works at its own cost.</p> <p>All events on City Council land give an undertaking not to cause damage, so if they do they can be required to put it right – there is a standard clause</p>

	in the agreement for this. In this case as I understand it the event did not cause any damage.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AR4: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> As discussed during the previous meeting, Manzil Way Gardens was damaged by contractors from St Hilda's College. I am delighted that the portfolio holder has confirmed that St Hilda's will make good the damage. Can they please confirm the timeline for the completion of this work?	<b>Written Response</b> The works will commence in the next few weeks, weather dependent, and will include steps taken to address the compaction and re-seed the affected areas. Temporary fencing will be erected while the new grass re-establishes. The timeline for the grass to re-establish will be partly weather dependent.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AR5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> I was pleased to see the government propose new powers for councils to tackle pavement parking. Noting that responsibility for these powers lies with the County Council as the transport authority, pavement parking nonetheless represents a key issue for residents in	<b>Written Response</b> Yes, I would encourage the County Council to act promptly once the powers are in place. There are huge problems with antisocial pavement parking across the city but they will need to acknowledge that in some areas there may not be an alternative option.

<p>East Oxford. Cowley Road in my ward is a particular hotspot. Will the portfolio holder take this opportunity to encourage the County Council to act as promptly as possible on pavement parking once the powers to do so are in place?</p>	
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>AR6: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Railton</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> The City Council passed a motion to make Oxford easier to walk and wheel around - and we assume this includes the winter months. In the last few weeks we have all experienced the dangerously icy conditions on pavements and cycle lanes and heard evidence of our residents falling from bikes or when walking, and others too fearful to leave their homes. This happened last winter too. We know that the City Council supply the grit bins and top-up the grit, but also that ODS do not provide the people power to actively grit pavements and cycle lanes. Therefore, could the cabinet holder offer some solutions to the problems of how to move the grit to our persistent problems areas - which might include better communications and/or work with community groups, colleges and secondary schools, senior scouts, trained volunteers, parish councils and local residents associations?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The current gritting regime within Oxford is carried out to the County's specification and that does not include specific gritting of footpaths and cycle paths.</p> <p>The Council's web pages are being updated to provide clearer advice to people around gritting, both what each council does and what residents can do with grit bins.</p> <p>A more systematic gritting of key cycle paths and pavements is beyond the placement of a few grit bins, so options are also being explored with ODS into delivering this. Additional budget will be required for an increase in gritting – watch this space at budget council.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

## Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

### NC1: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Chapman

#### Question

Given the drive for "active travel" it was concerning to see some of the conditions on key routes and a number of injuries during the recent bad weather. Is there an opportunity for Oxford City Council, ODS & Oxfordshire County Council to improve the current processes for these routes?

#### Written Response

I refer the Cllr to the answer from Cllr Railton AR6.

The County Council, as Highway Authority, is responsible for road safety, and the specification and budget for the work undertaken by ODS in this space. The County Council specification does not include gritting of footpaths and cycle paths. Through our Labour members on the County Council, we are making representations about these matters not least because the County Council wants to encourage safe active travel like cycling yet is doing nothing yet to grit the growing number of cycle paths in icy weather. The cost to the local NHS is significant as is the pain suffered by individuals and the disruption to families and businesses by inevitable absence from work.

#### Supplementary Question

None.

#### Verbal Response

### NC2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman

#### Question

Storage of bin bags on the pavement on Cornmarket by some food businesses remains a problem - encouraging rodents and destroying the public realm.

#### Written Response

I do agree this is an issue on Cornmarket and we are doing all we can to improve the situation.

<p>What enforcement action has been taken for non-compliance by businesses on Cornmarket in terms of the requirements for them to store their waste on their premises prior to the official collection time?</p>	<p>The Food Business Operators are given advice on waste as part of the food hygiene Inspection programme. If there is a non-compliance in storing waste prior to collection, this is included in the Food Hygiene Rating Score. Presenting waste for collection on the street at the incorrect time is dealt with by the Community Response Team.</p> <p>Businesses are required to present their waste on the highway to be collected by their Waste Collection Provider. In order to ensure that there is no excess waste left out during the busiest parts of the day and due to vehicle restrictions, waste is collected normally in the early hours of the day. This assists with the movement and safety of the public and allows for cleansing operations.</p> <p>Officers have conducted several operations in relation to commercial waste in the city centre. Businesses and organisations have been written to and a number spoken to in relation to their presentation of waste. There has been a variety of further enforcement actions taken involving service of legal notices and penalty notices being issued to those causing the most nuisance.</p> <p>At the moment, ODS cannot collect and store waste overnight at Cowley Marsh or in their refuse vehicles so a late evening collection is not feasible. We do rely on businesses to co-operate with us but will issue legal notices and penalty notices where necessary.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>The public toilets at Manzil Way Gardens are a key resource for residents of East Oxford. However, 3/5 are currently out of order. I have previously received reassurances that these are on the list for reparative work. Can the portfolio holder please outline the timeline for reparative works, including when these facilities will again be open to the public?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>There were a number of defects in these toilets, which were actioned and rectified before Christmas. Unfortunately, this appears to be a recurring issue because of vandalism. The current repairs are scheduled to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> January at the latest. We will also liaise with the Safer Oxford Team to explore any other avenues for addressing the antisocial behaviour.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

**Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture**

Q2

<p><b>AH1: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>		
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Why is all the CIL money collected by the City Council from the numerous developments in Littlemore being funnelled into the Cowley Branch line and not being protected and used for the direct benefit of the Littlemore Community?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The purpose of CIL is to raise funds for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. Oxford City Council created a CIL scheme to cover the whole city, and the funds are used to deliver the creation of new, or the repairs of existing, infrastructure. Much of this infrastructure is social and community projects that is of benefit to the whole of Oxford. For example, recent CIL funds have been used to support cycling infrastructure across the whole city, and the wholesale reconstruction of the East Oxford Community Centre, a building which has been and will be used by people from the whole of Oxford and beyond.</p>	

	<p>Over the last 10 years (up to October 2025, which is when the latest figures are available for) Oxford City Council has received £5,439,784 in CIL for developments in the Littlemore ward. Of that sum £815,968 has been given to Littlemore Parish Council for it to spend on infrastructure as it wishes.</p> <p>The allocation of funds to the Cowley Branch Line project will both benefit Littlemore, in creating a local railway station that has been missing for more than 50 years, and Oxford and Oxfordshire more broadly by providing a public transport option that will help to reduce private car journeys. It will also help to allow further development in Littlemore, which will generate further CIL funds. If the Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan is passed and adopted then Littlemore Parish Council will have an increased share of those funds, which it can - and I am sure will - spend on local community needs.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Stares asked the Cabinet Member how much longer would it be before Littlemore had amenities?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth responded that there had been a significant amount of attempts at investment. He added that the Littlemore Parish Council earned a substantial sum of money, with only spending £40,000 out of £815,968.</p>

<p><b>AH2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>With the introduction of the congestion charge, it is anticipated that Oxford City Council-operated car parks will experience a reduction in usage and associated income.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member provide a detailed</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The City Council is aware there was a short-term reduction in usage at City Centre car parks, as would be expected with any significant change to the transport network. There was also a short-term increase in use of the City Council operated Park and Ride car parks.</p>

breakdown of the projected or realised revenue losses, disaggregated by individual car park?	<p>However, there is currently only limited data available to understand what the longer-term impact of the introduction of the Congestion Charge might be, and it is too soon to draw any meaningful conclusion.</p> <p>The City Council will be monitoring data closely over time in order to see if any clear pattern or change emerges to all City Council operated car parks.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Henwood asked the Cabinet Member if they would release the data mentioned in the response received?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth said the data was short term and had short term impacts. He suggested to wait until the data had time to settle and then to draw a conclusion from it.</p>

<b>AH3: From Cllr Stares to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Can you please provide details of any impact upon the City Centre parking revenue following the introduction of the Congestion Charge?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>See AH2</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<b>AH4: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Given the ongoing uncertainty and lack of clarity around long-term support for the Bus Filter scheme and its financial implications, will the Council now reconsider the redevelopment of its car parks to offset operational losses, for example through housing or</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Car Parks continue to operate at a surplus, not an operational loss.</p>

<p>employment-led schemes, and if so, which sites are currently under active consideration, and will this require an amendment to the draft Oxford Local Plan?</p>	<p>The current Local Plan 2026 has policies that permit particular forms of development on some specific car parks, varying from location to location. These include Policy SP59 Union Street Car Park which would permit different forms of residential use along with the retention of sufficient car parking to serve the local area, Worcester Street and Becket Street car parks in Policy SP1 which covers the whole of the West End of the city centre and is expanded in more detail in the West End and Osney Mead SPD, and Policy AOC5 Summertown District Centre Policy which sets out the principles for rationalising land used for public and private car parking and the site specific Policy SP6 Diamond Place and Ewert House which would permit a range of uses along with the retention of sufficient car parking to serve the local area.</p> <p>There are no Local Plan policies preventing development on any car park sites, but other issues such as operational Flood Zones, impacts on Heritage Assets or the Green Belt might well need to be taken into account should any development be proposed. Any application for development on any car park site would need to be judged on its merits against all Development Plan policies and other material considerations. So there is no requirement to change any Local Plan policies.</p> <p>The City Council has been in ongoing discussion with local community groups in Summertown in relation to the Diamond Place site for some time about potential development, and that will continue. Of the other car parks specifically mentioned in the Local Plan policies there are currently no active plans for the redevelopment of Union Street, and the others are not owned by Oxford City Council.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

**AH5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

What reasons did Balfour Beatty give for withdrawing from the Oxpens Bridge project?

**Written Response**

Balfour Beatty provided several reasons for withdrawing from the Oxpens Bridge project: relationships within the project teams, project delays related to planning and technical approvals and cost recovery and resource constraints as delay had disrupted the original resource planning.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Muddiman asked the Cabinet Member to explain why there was such a reduction of costs from the new contract with Jacksons to the original contract with Balfour Beatty. She further asked if the council would still need the 3.7 million virement.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Hollingsworth responded that the main reason for the difference between the two contracts was that Balfour Beatty was a design and construction contract, whereas the contract with Jacksons did not include the design element. Regarding the virement, he stated that this was put in place to have a temporary fix while resources were being sought from elsewhere. This had not yet been finalised, but he stated he was hopeful it would be.

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**AH6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

Has the council appointed a new contractor for Oxpens Bridge and if so who is it?

**Written Response**

A procurement exercise has been undertaken to appoint a new contractor to deliver the bridge. The contractor, Jacksons Civil Engineering Group Ltd, has been selected and it is intended to appoint them once the regulatory procurement and governance standstill periods (as defined in the Procurement Act 2023 Section 51 regulations; these do not formally apply to this contract as the Framework being used was based on the previous regulations, but are regarded as best practice, and so are being followed here)

<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Muddiman asked the Cabinet Member if they would consider delaying the signing of the contract until the motion was heard?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Hollingsworth responded that the Council had been trying to pursue construction of the bridge for 20 years and due to legal challenges, costs had been increased. Therefore, he had no intention of increasing the cost without purpose.</p>
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<p><b>AH7: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>How much has the council spent on buying steel for the Oxpens Bridge project without having a contractor in place</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The Council has not purchased steel for the bridge. The potential expenditure was added to the forward plan as it would be a key decision where it required, but it was not. It is now anticipated that this will occur after the contractor has been appointed.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>AH8: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p> <p>Building on the new site at Hill View, Mill Lane in Marston to create 159 new dwellings started last October. Despite concerns over building in green belt, using inappropriate roads for construction traffic and having the exit/entrance through a village with sheltered accommodation for vulnerable people, old buildings of preservation status and local schools; the building has gone ahead - and multiple breaches to the construction site management plan have been made.</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The City Council has taken enforcement action regarding the development at Hill View Farm, but it is important to be aware of the limitations on the legal jurisdiction that applies to some issues, such as speeding by vehicles on the public highways and civil issues between private individuals or between a private individual and an organisation or business.</p> <p>In line with the council's Corporate Enforcement Policy, the Planning Enforcement Team has taken a graduated approach to addressing the</p>

Residents have reported countless breaches of dangerous construction site traffic speeding, or vehicles using residential roads outside agreed times, caused school commuters danger; beautiful old buildings to crack, break and cause foundation damage. Recently the drilling of a deep trench for cabling to the site has caused further structural damage to the cottages adjacent. The planning enforcement team on the City Council have been inundated with evidence, however, they seem to have no cause of action to enforce changes/ agree compensation to residents for considerable housing damage. Thames Valley Police also refuse engagement with the issue of breaches of the traffic plan. How can you reassure us that the conditions within the construction site management plans which are placed on developers hold any weight - and that the City and County Council will actually hold developers, such as Bellway, to account?

issues raised by engaging with contractors and site operatives to resolve matters without the need to take formal enforcement action. However this option remains under consideration and may yet be used.

Officers have visited the site to undertake their own evidence gathering, particularly early in the mornings. Their engagement with the developer has secured additional signage on roads leading to the site, along with the provision of traffic marshals to ensure construction traffic accesses the site during the agreed hours and navigates to and from the site safely.

The City Council does not have the legal jurisdiction to enforce vehicle speeds on the public highway. Speeding is a road traffic offence, and Thames Valley Police are therefore the enforcing authority. A possible option for the affected local residents is to consider establishing a Community Speedwatch programme to support the Thames Valley Police in fining speeding vehicles, and get a greater engagement by Thames Valley Police in addressing issues where it is the authority with the enforcement powers.

Any damage to residential properties is a civil matter between the developers and those affected. The City Council has no jurisdiction to act in such matters nor the legislative authority to seek compensation on their behalf.

The City Council continues to monitor the site to address issues when they are raised, where it was the power to do so, and will be supportive as far as it can of issues where the legal jurisdiction sits with Thames Valley Police or are civil matters.

**Supplementary Question**

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Robinson asked the Cabinet Member how the planning enforcement teams graduated approach was in line with its own corporate enforcement policy?

Councillor Hollingsworth responded that the planning enforcement team do not have the power to apply speeding traffic as the polices engagement on that was necessary. The only way it could be changed was on a national level.

## Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

### LS1: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith

#### Question

There is a huge need in The Leys for community space. What is the current timetable for opening of the community centre?

#### Written Response

Currently, the community centre is set to be delivered in two phases with the building shell & core or envelope being delivered by Peabody, and the internal fit out by the Council. Construction works for the shell and core are due to start at the end of January/early Feb 2026, with completion programmed for March 2027. Delivery of internal fit out will follow and is programmed to take 12 months to complete, making occupation of the centre possible from March 2028. Officers are currently exploring delivery options to try and reduce that timeline.

#### Supplementary Question

None.

#### Verbal Response

### LS2: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith

#### Question

Considering Sandy Lane football pitches, what specific plans are in place to ensure that the football pitches currently proposed for development will be replaced or

#### Written Response

A report to Cabinet on this development, including proposals to ensure the continued provision, or improvement, of the football pitches and facilities is

relocated? It is vital for our community to maintain access to adequate sporting facilities, particularly for youth and grassroots football programs.	on the Forward Plan for March 2026. Plans will be brought forward in more detail at this time. Consultation with the local football clubs has commenced and will continue, recognising the need for good community access to facilities, and the great work of local clubs like Blackbirds FC and Greater Leys FC who OxPlace and the council wish to work in close partnership with on this project.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Re Sandy Lane football pitches, where will the replacement pitches be located, and what is the timeline for their availability?	<b>Written Response</b> Plans will be brought forward in more detail in the Cabinet report in March, as referenced above. Re-provision of the pitches and facilities will take place ahead of the commencement of any development for much needed affordable homes.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Linda Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Residents at Knights road have been unable to access their rear gate for many months meaning they cannot for examples use their bicycles. They have raised this with Hill numerous times to no effect and residents'	<b>Written Response</b> Hill and Peabody acknowledge that rear access to some of the existing properties on Knights Rd has been closed off since works started 2 years ago.

fences have been damaged many months ago with a fence erected on the other side which means residents cannot access the alleyway. Residents were promised action back in Oct 2025, so can the Cabinet Member confirm if the Council will be working with Hill to address these concerns.

Works at Knights Road have been delayed by two main issues: the need to replace groundworks subcontractors who went into administration, and prolonged planning processes for two planning applications. The LPA has now approved both the S73 and the application for a new temporary Spindleberry Close access road, and Hill are now working with their sub - contractors to complete the necessary works to handover the first phase of the development. This will open up part of the site and allow rear access to these properties again.

Peabody will be contacting residents with a timetable for when they can expect to regain use of their rear gates, as well as agreeing a solution to the levels issue affecting one particular property.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

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