

**To: Council**  
**Date: 23 March 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 Stares to Cllr Brown

#### Question

Will the leader of the City Council confirm the length of service of each current councillor, and will the Council publish a list showing all councillors and the number of years they have served representing residents of Oxford?

#### Written Response

This information is already provided and can be found on the Council's website for all current Councillors, including details of their terms of office: [Your Councillors | Oxford City Council](#).

#### Supplementary Question

None.

#### Verbal Response

### SB2: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Brown

#### Question

The council co-owns OxWed, the company developing the Oxpens area. Given Oxford's housing crisis, can the portfolio holder explain why OxWed is only proposing 117 affordable and 117 open market, one-

#### Written Response

The Oxpens site is allocated for mixed use development under Policy SP1 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and is a key element of Oxford City Council's vision and objectives for the West End, as set out in the West End and Osney Mead Supplementary Planning Document. The Oxpens

<p>and two-bedroom flats, on this large site which they co-own?</p>	<p>site as a whole, which includes land and buildings not owned by OXWED, plays an important role in bringing forward a vibrant extension to the city centre.</p> <p>The site owned by the joint venture between the council and Nuffield college called OXWED LLP secured planning permission in 2025 for a mixed-use development in accordance with the policy.</p> <p>This is a complex brownfield site, which has required land assembly over several years and has very high costs to make it developable, including multi-million pound flood mitigation works that include changing the level of the site. In working up the planning application the joint venture has had to balance land use, infrastructure requirements and viability very carefully. The Council is not the single decision maker in respect of the land.</p> <p>As a city centre site adjacent to multiple different public transport hubs it is also ideal for employment as well as housing, so mixed-use is the best use of this important site.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Muddiman asked how does this align with Council's aspiration for 15-minute city?</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown emphasised that it would be harder to find a better example of a 15-minute city, noting the adjacency to station, park and ride, and bus station which is well connected to the county. The value of the employment site was also emphasised.</p>

<p><b>SB3: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> The Leader of the Council has recently said in public: "...[we have] never supported the Congestion Charge, nor do we support the Workplace Parking Levy".</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> Cllr Gant introduced the Congestion Charge, with no consultation with the City Council, with city residents or with city businesses. Ever since on</p>

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The City Council Cabinet considered a paper on Connecting Oxford plan, which "...includes a workplace parking levy and traffic restrictions" [para 4]. Speaking in support of the recommendation to endorse the plan at that cabinet meeting, Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, then Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Transport, described these policies as "significant and far-reaching proposals, prepared and co-produced with the County Council. The need for them could be well summed up by the point that 'doing nothing [i]s not an option.' The Council had been faced with difficult choices in the past about traffic management in the City and must do so again now... [it has] become clear that a significant number of people who would otherwise ride bicycles in the City were deterred by the fear of having to share the road with motor vehicles... [and]... One consequence of congestion in the City was that... Some bus services had already been lost and there was a risk that others might follow... The introduction of bus gates should reduce car traffic by about 40%, so lessening congestion, increasing the rate of flow and removing the need for bus lanes, provide an opportunity to improve the quality of dedicated cycle lanes and the pedestrian environment. The other important element of the proposal would be the introduction of the Workplace Parking Levy." The City Council Cabinet accepted his recommendation and endorsed the paper.

How do you reconcile the apparent contradiction between those statements and actions by your cabinet and your own recent statement?

**Supplementary Question**

behalf of city residents and businesses the Labour City Council has opposed the Congestion Charge.

In terms of the Workplace Parking levy, we have always opposed extending it beyond the ring road to include BMW - and his administration on the county are now proposing to do that.

It is also the case that this could only work with the engagement with employers and their buy-in, which his administration has failed to deliver. So no, we do not support what we now feel is an unworkable policy.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Gant queried differences between a statement previously provided to the Oxford Mail by Councillor Brown and the policy adopted by Cabinet.

Councillor Brown referred Councillor Gant to her written answer.

#### SB4: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown

##### Question

The Leader also said "...we made it 100% clear that we disagreed fundamentally with the [County Council's] approach. We think that the policies are neither the right ones nor do we believe they are likely to be successful. We made that clear...we are of the opinion that if the bus filters are introduced in Oxford, then all local city residents should be exempt...Our views...have been continually ignored by the County Council for years."

Speaking officially on behalf of the cabinet of this city council, then-Cabinet member for Health and Transport Cllr Louise Upton said: "For a long time, Oxford City Council has advocated the need for measures to alleviate the impact of traffic...that is the problem these traffic filters are designed to solve...The City Council has worked with you [the County Council] ...to shape these proposals...with exemptions and permits that balance the absolute need to reduce traffic, with allowing business vehicles to operate and residents who can't switch to other means to drive...[these measures are] important for our environment, our health, and our economy. But most importantly we believe they are necessary to SAVE OUR BUS NETWORK [Cllr Upton's capitalisation]. So please support them."

##### Written Response

Since the time that the City Council worked with a previous administration at the County Council on transport proposals, including working on measures to promote bus travel, Cllr Gant and his county colleagues have chosen to implement multiple new transport policies, all with slightly different exemptions.

We have also had a chance to see how the Congestion Charge is working – or rather not working – for many local people.

Therefore, it is now our view that if the County are still minded to introduce the traffic filters in the autumn this year, then they should exempt all Oxford residents.

LGR will give the new authority – which we hope will be Greater Oxford – a chance to shape new more consistent public transport policies, working WITH local communities and businesses rather than doing TO them.

We absolutely do support measures to promote bus travel – that means looking at fares, routes and frequency, not just restriction of car movements.

<p>So, far from ignoring the City Council, the County Council did exactly what the City Council robustly urged it to do. How do you reconcile these two apparently contradictory positions taken by this council?</p>	
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant queried a contradiction in comments on the matter.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown emphasised that the City Council has worked hard to find collaborative ways of working with the County Council; unfortunately, this has been more challenging recently in relation to transport polices.</p>

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<p><b>SB5: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> As Cllr Upton acknowledged, Cabinet members of this council were a key part of the working group which designed the traffic filters scheme, alongside their counterparts from the county council. The scheme was designed and approved jointly, including the detail of permits and exemptions. Nobody mentioned the idea of giving exemptions to all Oxford residents. Why not?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> We have now had time to see the scheme in action and the impact on local residents. As well as the interaction with the various other schemes that the county council has introduced.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant queried the permits and exemptions scheme.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> As the question was unclear Councillor Brown provided no further additions to her written response.</p>

**SB6: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown****Question**

As Cllr Upton also acknowledged, the traffic filters scheme is closely aligned with the recommendations of Oxford City Council's own Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change. It, and its interim version the congestion charge, are equally closely aligned with the very clear recommendations of the County Council's Citizens' Assembly on transport. Does the Leader think the County Council should take note of the recommendations from these two assemblies in making and delivering policy?

**Written Response**

Unlike Cllr Gant, I attended every session of the Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change, the first for a city in the UK.

So, I am aware that transport was not the biggest focus of that Assembly and it focused on outcomes rather than the measures to get there.

An incredibly important recommendation of the Assembly was the need to communicate clearly about climate change and engage with communities. It was particularly in relation to transport policy that this was raised. The county council has singularly failed to do this in recent years.

**Supplementary:**

None.

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**SB7: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown****Question**

As mentioned above, Cllr Brown stated in respect of County Council transport policies "We think that the policies are neither the right ones nor do we believe they are likely to be successful. We made that clear." Published modelling suggests that they are "likely to be successful", and indeed they are being successful right now. What evidence does she have for her belief to the contrary? What modelling did she use to base that statement on?

**Written Response**

We are not 5 months into the County Council's experiment with the Congestion Charge yet, but residents and businesses across the city have expressed their unhappiness about how this is working for them. Increased journey times and huge increases in the distances people are forced to travel, are not going down well, particularly with the current increases in fuel prices.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Gant queried what modelling was used for this analysis.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Brown reminded Councillor Gant that his question related to transport policies of the County Council, for which this Council is not responsible and she cannot respond.

### SB8: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown

#### Question

Does the city council welcome the projected reduction in casualties by 28 per year as a direct result of the congestion charge and traffic filters?

#### Written Response

I am aware of the report that Cllr Gant refers to, and I am also aware that considerable doubt has been expressed about the robustness of the projected data within it. I will personally wait until we have heard about real reductions, which will only be measurable over time, rather than projections based on very little.

#### Supplementary Question

Councillor Gant asked whether the City Council welcomes the projected reduction in casualties by 2028 as a direct result of the congestion charge and traffic filters.

#### Verbal Response

Councillor Brown welcomed any reduction in casualties on roads but noted doubt relating to the robustness of the data within the report.

### SB9: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown

#### Question

Modelling which has been publicly available for a number of years clearly shows that over 95% of the projected reduction in congestion delivered by the congestion charge and traffic filters comes from journeys undertaken entirely within the city. What account did the Leader take of this data in proposing that "all local city residents should be exempt"? Was that proposal modelled or tested? What did the modelling say?

#### Written Response

I would suggest that if the modelling is showing that nearly 100% of the journeys that Cllr Gant is trying to stop are city residents moving about their city, rather than commuters coming into it, then the congestion charge is not the right measure.

<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant asked what modelling was done in relation to the matter.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown referred Councillor Gant to her written response.</p>
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<p><b>SB10: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Does the Leader believe that giving full exemptions from the traffic filters to all Oxford residents will continue to deliver the gains in bus productivity already realised from the congestion charge, including new routes, faster timetables and free Park and Ride travel? Has this aspect been tested with those responsible for delivering bus services in our city? What did they say?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> As Cllr Gant will be aware, the City Council is not the transport authority. But we have encouraged you to use the considerable sums raised by the Congestion Charge to subsidise bus fares for people in the city, not just residents of the rest of Oxfordshire through subsidising the park and ride.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant asked whether Councillor Brown agreed that the most important factor in speeding up bus times and routes is tackling congestion.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown noted that several factors would encourage more people to use buses; cost was also referenced.</p>

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<p><b>SB11: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> As mentioned above, Cllr Brown stated that “all local city residents should be exempt” from the traffic filters. Who exactly is meant by this? Where is the map? What modelling underpins it?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> I am surprised that Cllr Gant is not aware of the boundaries of the City Council, but they can be found here: <a href="https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/304/oxford-city-council-boundary-map">https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/304/oxford-city-council-boundary-map</a></p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown referred Councillor Gant to the County Council in relation to transport matters.</p>

Councillor Gant asked whether Councillor Brown could confirm the Oxford City Council boundary when defining residents of the city.

**SB12: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown**

**Question**

Cllr Brown's new policy on the traffic filters is not the same as the policy of the Labour group on the County Council (even though several councillors are members of both and are thus openly supporting two different policies). How do you reconcile this contradiction?

**Written Response**

I speak for the City Council on behalf of residents of Oxford.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Gant requested that Councillor Brown instruct the administration to support the policies of this Council.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Brown clarified and emphasised that, as Leader of the Council, it is not her role to instruct the administration; she instead represents the Council in various capacities.

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**SB13: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown**

**Question**

Why has the Labour group on the County Council, which is the transport authority, not publicly endorsed the City Council's new policy on traffic filters? What advice did the County Labour group give you about the implications of your new policy?

**Written Response**

I cannot answer questions on behalf of another authority, although it seems that Cllr Gant has the ability to take his role on another authority to ask questions in this council chamber.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

**SB14: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Brown**

<p><b>Question</b> When the administration of this council chose to oppose the congestion charge, what account did you take of the well-publicised synergies between congestion reduction and the deployment of 172 zero-emission buses, as set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan's accompanying delivery plan?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> When Cllr Gant's administration on the county council chose to impose the congestion charge on the City of Oxford, what account did they take of the views of the City Council, residents, or businesses in Oxford? None.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Gant challenged that there was a contradiction between the policy and the facts.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown referred Councillor Gant to her written response.</p>

<p><b>SB15: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Brown</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Between 2-3 weeks ago, residents in Donnington estate reported a burst or leaking pipe in the centre of Donnington Bridge Road, in front of no. 41, to Thames Water. Thames Water says this report is still being investigated. Another report of a leak further down the road reported on 5 March has the status "planning for a repair", and notes that the company may need to work with local authorities which may take a little longer. Will the portfolio holder urge Thames Water to investigate the leak outside no. 41 urgently, act quickly on both reports if there is a risk that a leak to a pipe beneath this road could result in much greater damage to the area, and also ensure the council acts swiftly to support the repair however is necessary?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> I am happy to write to Thames Water on behalf of local residents.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Rawle requested that the Council write to Thames Water to emphasise how long residents had</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown committed to writing to Thames Water and offered to liaise with Councillor Rawle to ensure her comments be included.</p>

waited without updates and to note the impacts experienced.

**Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; Deputy Leader of the Council (Statutory)**

**ET1: From Cllr Roz Smith to Cllr Turner**

**Question**

How much money did the council receive from the sale of Grenoble Road strategic site to Magdalen college and what does it intend to do with the proceeds?

**Written Response**

The total money the council has and will receive from the sale is confidential in line with the commercial agreement with the purchaser. However, just over 40% was received on completion in 2025 with the remainder to be paid on time milestones across a 15-year period. The proceeds form part of the councils' resources to fund the capital programme and reduce the need to borrow. Such resources are not allocated to specific projects.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

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**ET2: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Turner**

**Question**

The "Greater Oxford" Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation has been prepared by the administration and Council Officers. Further to my question at an earlier Council, can the Cabinet Member update the Council:

**Written Response**

Budgeted resources by the Council for 2025-26 total £200k. In addition to this the Council have been given a £95k grant from the Government. The total spend to date on consultancy advice and other resources to prepare the LGR 3 Councils proposal, publicise the MHCLG consultation – as requested by Government - and progress the preparatory phase of collaborative working with the other Oxfordshire and West Berkshire

<p>1. Has any additional funding been provided by the national Government or other sources external to the Council?</p> <p>2. How much has now been spent from Council funds and from which budget?</p> <p>At the Council meeting on 24th November we were informed that £288,000 had been spent so far in the 2025/26 FY. As the constitution (18.10) requires that unbudgeted expenditure in excess of £250,000 is brought to Cabinet and/or Council could the Cabinet Member explain where and when this decision was made?</p>	<p>Councils is £295,000. This is in line with the Budget allocation and because the Council budget spend is under £250k decisions could be taken by officers in line with the scheme of delegation in the Constitution.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>Councillor Fouweather noted that since November, only an additional £7000 had been spent and he requested that an audited list of expenditure be circulated to the Council.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p> <p>Councillor Turner thanked Councillor Fouweather for his recognition of social media work undertaken in relation to Local Government Reorganisation and offered to provide further information as requested.</p> <p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>Between 1 April 2024 and 30 April 2026, the Council has incurred expenditure of £490,746 from its General Fund in relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) work.</p> <p>This total includes costs associated with securing specialist consultancy advice and resourcing to support the development of the three-council LGR proposal. It also covers expenditure on publicising the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation, in line with Government requirements, as well as progressing the preparatory phase of collaborative working with partner authorities across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.</p> <p>This spend is based on data across two years and the data available at this time.</p>

**AR1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton**

**Question**

How much pending maintenance is required for the city's playground equipment? How does this compare to a typical year, and when do we anticipate the backlog will be cleared?

**Written Response**

Play equipment repairs are usually identified at either monthly, or 6 Monthly statutory inspections.  
 Inspections in 2025 identified c £156,400.00 worth of repairs and replacements, of which £123,582.50 were instructed during the course of the year. The remaining £32,800 will be prioritised for instruction early in 2026 financial year, planned under the play equipment capital budget. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by June 2026. Equipment replacement spend is somewhat higher than previous years, due to the wet weather conditions and accelerated degradation of timber play equipment, which will be replaced with metal equipment as part of this work

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

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**AR2: From Cllr Goddard to Cllr Railton**

**Question**

When was the last maintenance check done on the playgrounds in Wolvercote and the play equipment last updated?

**Written Response**

Monthly Playground inspections took place in February, coinciding with this, the 6 monthly statutory inspection also took place in February. Officers are awaiting the findings of this inspection for confirmation of any repair requirements.  
 Lower Wolvercote Green is due to have the two new items of play equipment installed, funded through a CIL application made by the Wolvercote Commoners. Upper Wolvercote Green has no immediate works identified as being required at present.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Goddard asked when the inspection will be available and, in the event, that works were required, could this be communicated.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Railton welcomed communication and committed to respond following this meeting with the relevant dates.

**Written Response**

The last inspection playgrounds report for Wolvercote, dated February 2026 was forwarded to Cllr Goddard (28<sup>th</sup> March 26). The report identified two items to be replaced (Monkey bars and Net climber) Once funding is confirmed this will be scheduled for this coming summer.

**AR3: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Railton****Question**

The roundabout in the small children's playground on Stone Meadow was removed over a year ago because it was considered unsafe. Residents were informed that it would have been replaced in 2025 but this area is still out of action and surrounded by temporary high metal fencing. When exactly will the roundabout be replaced with new equipment and the temporary metal fencing removed?

**Written Response**

The Equipment will be replaced in May this year, and fencing will be removed at the same time. The delay was due to cost clarifications and longer than expected manufacturing lead time.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response****AR4: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton****Question**

Will the Council commit to not fell any trees in Grandpont Nature Park during the 2026 nesting season?

**Written Response**

The programme for the delivery of the bridge is being reviewed. If it is necessary to remove trees before the end of the bird nesting season it will

only be done with an ecological clerk of works in attendance to confirm there is no nesting birds.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Muddiman asked whether the ecological works will be undertaken by the Council as the developer, or an independent body.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Railton committed to writing with a response.

**Written Response**

The normal approach would be to appoint an ecological consultant to provide the service. Can confirm that for this project it will be an external ecologist.

**AR5: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton**

**Question**

Will the portfolio holder ask the Westgate Centre to consider introducing a compulsory pre-booking scheme for parking in the Westgate carpark at weekends?

**Written Response**

The Westgate Car Park is a privately managed car park, the Council has previously approached them around this but ultimately it is for the Westgate to determine how the car parking is managed.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Muddiman noted that the Westgate Hub is in process of recruiting a new manager and asked whether they will share this idea with the new appointee.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Railton confirmed that the idea could be communicated, but the Council has no means to ensure it is taken onboard.

**AR6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton**

**Question**

Will the Council sign the Bristol Declaration on Healthy Transport', calling for the transformation of the UK to a place where healthy transport options are the easiest, natural choice for most everyday journeys, without relying on a car?

**Written Response**

Yes, though I note the city council has already made a number of active interventions for the 10 actions we have control over. The city council is not the decision maker for the majority of the actions in this declaration.

<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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<b>AR7: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> Oxford can be proud of its progress on addressing air quality. February saw the publication of the Air Quality Action plan 2026-2030. Within the plan, the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods is listed as a key achievement which has been responsible for 'creating quieter and safer streets, leading also to air quality improvement. Similarly, traffic filters, the workplace parking levy and the expansion of the ZEZ are listed as major transport initiatives 'which aim to reduce private car usage'. Given that priority A of the Air Quality Action Plan is 'Promoting Active Travel and reducing the need to drive', can the portfolio holder confirm the administration's position on these measures, which their own Air Quality Action Plan, as approved the cabinet, clearly identify as essential to securing the necessary improvements to air quality in Oxford City?	<b>Written Response</b> There is a publicly available statement issued by the Leader of Oxford City Council, Councillor Susan Brown, in her right of reply submitted on 2 March 2026. This statement sets out the administration's position regarding the transport measures referenced in the Air Quality Action Plan: <a href="#"><u>Statement from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council (2 March 2026):</u></a> "Responsibilities for air quality and transport are currently split across two councils. Oxford City Council is responsible for monitoring and reporting on air quality, while Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, is responsible for transport policy and measures such as LTNs, traffic filters, the Workplace Parking Levy and the Zero Emission Zone. As we made clear when approving the Air Quality Action Plan, the City Council must report on measures proposed by the transport authority, but we do not control them. We have set out our view that we disagree with the County Council's approach and do not believe that several of the policies proposed are the right ones or likely to be successful. For the record, Oxford Labour has never supported a Congestion Charge, does not support a Workplace Parking Levy, and believes that if bus filters are introduced, all city residents should be exempt. We have also asked the County Council to review some LTNs where residents have raised concerns. Our view is that the preferences of residents and businesses in Oxford have not been sufficiently taken into account by the County Council. The proposed '3Councils' reorganisation provides an opportunity to bring transport decision-making back to the city."

	This publicly available statement outlines the administration's current position in relation to the transport schemes referenced in the city's Air Quality Action Plan.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Muddiman asked whether the Council's administration supports the bus service.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Railton noted that they do not in its current form.

<b>AR8: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder please outline what the likely implications of not proceeding with traffic filters, the workplace parking levy and the expansion of the ZEZ would be for Oxford's ability to meet its new Local NO <sub>2</sub> target of 20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	<b>Written Response</b> Oxford City Council has a statutory duty to review and assess air quality in the city and to produce an Air Quality Action Plan that sets out how the city intends to achieve its air quality objectives. Many of the dominant sources of nitrogen dioxide emissions in Oxford are transport-related. However, Oxfordshire County Council is the Highways Authority and therefore holds responsibility for transport policy and for schemes such as traffic filters, the Workplace Parking Levy, and any expansion of the Zero Emission Zone.  The City Council's Air Quality Action Plan references transport schemes being developed by the County Council and other partners because they are important contributors to the improvements in emissions that underpin the plan's projections.  The commitment to meeting Oxford's local annual mean nitrogen dioxide target of 20 µg/m <sup>3</sup> by 2030 is based on the combined delivery of the full suite of measures set out in the Action Plan, including those led by partner authorities. If a number of these transport-related measures were not to proceed, the overall scale of emission reduction assumed in the Action Plan would be reduced. This would make achieving the 2030 local NO <sub>2</sub> target more challenging and could compromise the city's ability to meet it.  In short, the city doesn't decide on any of the schemes you mention here but will be monitoring the air quality impacts across Oxford. Our air quality

	monitoring work does also not usually extend to predicting the impact of schemes like this.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Powell requested confirmation that the Council appreciates that by not pursuing these measures, they will be acting less ambitiously in tackling emissions.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Railton rejected this comment, noting that much of the matter does not fall within the Council's control.

<b>AR9: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Railton</b>	
<b>Question</b> Trees in Davenant Road have grown to the extent that significant parts of the pavement are hazardous for pedestrians and impassable for wheelchair users, people with buggies and the less mobile. Has this issue been identified in routine inspection and monitoring, and does Davenant Road feature in long-term maintenance plans?	<b>Written Response</b> The maintenance of trees within the highway is the responsibility of the County Council. To address the problems arising from the trees it has been identified that it requires works that go beyond the maintenance responsibility of the City Council under S42 and therefore the County Council have been in discussion with residents and ODS around a potential solution to the problem.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

### Cabinet Member for a Safer Oxford

<b>LA1: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad</b>	
<b>Question</b> In recent weeks, there has been an increased level of immigration enforcement activity in Oxford. As a	<b>Written Response</b>

<p>council of sanctuary, Oxford has undertaken to actively support migrant communities in the city. During the increased immigration enforcement activity, immigration enforcement officers have been actively collaborating with Thames Valley Police. Will the portfolio holder please outline whether she has had any correspondence with the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding this increased activity?</p>	<p>The portfolio holder is not aware of an increase in immigration enforcement activity in Oxford and has not had any correspondence with the Police and Crime Commissioner on this matter.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>LA2: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Will the portfolio holder undertake to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner raising concerns about the negative impact that increased collaboration between Thames Valley Police and immigration enforcement has on our communities?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> The portfolio holder has not been made aware of increased collaboration between the police and immigration enforcement in the city.  The portfolio holder will raise the matter with the police to seek assurances that such activities are sensitive to community concerns and align to stated national government policies.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Powell asked whether the Cabinet Member appreciates that given the orientation of the current government, the alignment of local policies offers little comfort to residents.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Arshad rejected the comment.</p>

<p><b>LA3: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> During the recent budget process, council approved the creation of new anti-social behaviour wardens. As</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p>

<p>a non-statutory role, council has the opportunity to set the remit of these wardens. Will the portfolio holder please confirm that the warden's role will not involve any engagement with immigration enforcement outside of the strict legal obligations incumbent on the council?</p>	<p>The Community Safety Service teams work in partnership with a wide range of organisations. This may involve working on issues relating to modern slavery and the exploitation of adults and children. Where immigration teams have a role to play in the disruption of these activities, Council officers and other partners will work with the Home Office on these matters, and we will engage where there is a legal requirement upon us to do so.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Powell requested confirmation that any engagement with immigration enforcement would only be limited that which the law requires.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Arshad confirmed this.</p>

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<p><b>LA4: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Arshad</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder please confirm the extent to which the council collaborates with the voluntary returns process in collaboration with immigration enforcement?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> The Council does not assist in the voluntary returns process in licensing.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

**Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies**

<p><b>NC1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Chapman</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> The Bury Knowle toilets have been in a poor state for a considerable time, with some cubicles barricaded and</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p>

<p>all in need of paint and external cleaning in order to present a welcoming appearance to passers-by. Will you ensure these are renovated?</p>	<p>I share councillors' frustration at the state of our public toilets. In this case and in others, we are dealing with a shocking level of vandalism which means the repairs are complex, costly and take time.</p> <p>There are nine toilets at Bury Knowle with three currently closed as they have been badly vandalised with smashed tiles and ripped up flooring. The repairs will be undertaken, which, after lead times for materials, will take circa four weeks.</p> <p>It should be noted that these toilets were decorated in 2024/25.</p> <p>The above repairs will be done ahead of a survey of the condition of all our public toilets. The budget for the survey was approved in the latest budget. Following commissioning, this is likely to be completed in the summer.</p> <p>Once the results are known, a prioritised programme of capital works will be presented to Council officers for approval. I have urged Council officers and ODS get these repairs done as soon as is feasible.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

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<p><b>NC2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> There is a leaking roof in the diamond place public toilets. What is the timeline for the roof to be mended?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>There are six toilets in this block. There are presently three unaffected cubicles, with a fourth awaiting repair. The remaining cubicles are closed awaiting the major roof repair to be completed.</p> <p>As I replied in my earlier answer, the above repairs will be done ahead of a survey of the condition of all our public toilets, the budget for the survey was approved in the latest budget. Following commissioning, this is likely to be completed in the summer. Once the results are known, a prioritised programme of capital works will be presented to Council officers for approval. I think we all regret we are facing this expense and the temporary closure of facilities in our parks and other spaces.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

Councillor Miles described the damaging methods being used by ODS to tape signs to toilet doors and asked whether an alternative method could be found.

Councillor Chapman noted the issue and committed to raising it and exploring it at his next regular meeting with ODS.

### NC3: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Chapman

#### Question

ODS is about to buy some new bin lorries and other HGVs. Can the portfolio holder set out whether he agrees that standards for "Direct Vision" or other vision safety standards which prevent cyclists and pedestrian deaths should form part of the decision making on this?

#### Written Response

All ODS bin lorries are fitted with MOIS systems which detect cyclists and pedestrians in the vehicles blind spots. If an object is detected, the driver is alerted via an audible system within the cab of the vehicle. Along with this, the vehicles are also fitted with rear mounted LED warning lights.

#### Supplementary Question

Councillor Kerr explained that her original question had related to new lorries, on the existing stock and requested information on how the Council will adhere to the relevant legislation.

#### Verbal Response

Councillor Chapman emphasised that the Council always seeks to comply with high standards and endeavour to keep up with new standards and regulations.

### NC4: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Chapman

#### Question

During the previous full council meeting of January 26 i.e. the meeting prior to budget council, the cabinet member confirmed that repairs to the Manzil Way public toilets were due to be completed no later than January 30. However, at time of writing two of these public toilets remain out of order. Can the portfolio

#### Written Response

There have been numerous repairs undertaken over the last couple of months. Unfortunately, serious and costly damage has re-occurred since these repairs were completed. There are five toilets in this block, with two out of action due to vandalism. The doors used for the toilets are fabricated metal doors and have been damaged beyond repair. One has a bent steel door and frame, and the

holder please explain the delay and outline when repairs will actually be actioned?	<p>other has damage to the door handle, which will need metal strengthening. Before commissioning any further repairs, in the short term, advice will be sought from the Community Safety Problem Solving Officer.</p> <p>As I replied to a similar question about other toilet closures, the above repairs will be done ahead of a survey of the condition of all our public toilets, the budget for the survey was approved in the latest budget. Following commissioning this is likely to be completed in the summer. Once the results are known a prioritised programme of capital works will be presented for approval. Community Safety advice will also inform the programme of works.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Powell asked if the Cabinet Member would undertake to prioritise looking at accessible facilities.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Chapman confirmed this.</p>

<p><b>NC5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Chapman</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> During the budget setting process, several of the political groups put forward amendments focused on noticeboards in the city. The Scrutiny Committee also recommended that action to standardise the provision of notice boards was taken. While it is accepted that council did not opt for this course of action and there is not now funding for an officer to operationalise the running of noticeboards, can the portfolio holder please confirm whether there might be scope for replenishment of noticeboards to be included within existing funds for street scene repairs?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> As detailed in the report to Scrutiny Committee, there are circa 80 noticeboards across the City Council's communities. These are maintained by volunteers. The system is not overseen by a designated officer and there is also no dedicated budget to maintain their physical state. There is potential to utilise CIL and / or ward member budgets. Further details are available about this on the website and via the Members' area on the intranet. <a href="#">Members page Support Your Community with Ward Member Budget and Community Infrastructure Levy funding</a> Most community noticeboards in the city were put in through member ward budgets in the first place.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<b>NC6: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Chapman</b>	
<p><b>Question</b> It is understood that sometimes, ODS may have to leave batteries left out by residents to be recycled if the cages are full and collect them instead on the following collection day. Can the portfolio holder explain how this is being communicated to residents, so they know that this is the reason that they have not been picked up, and not that the pick-up was forgotten or rejected?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> ODS has had issues with a number of the cages on the RCV fleet. ODS have undertaken the necessary repairs at their workshop and alterations have been made so there should be no further failure in collecting batteries. The councillor is right – the norm if we miss a collection is to undertake it on the next appropriate collection day (so within a fortnight). It is not practical for us to contact each householder for obvious reasons. If we were to miss many collections – and this should not happen now – we will use social media to alert residents.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

## Cabinet Member for Planning and Culture

<b>AH1: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b> The Museum of Oxford Income Generation Review November 2024 includes several alternative ideas for revenue generation for the Museum. Could you clarify why other ways of increasing revenue were not trialled before charging for entry was introduced?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> Other ways of increasing revenue for the museum have been trialled, for the last four years. This includes room hire, donations, a pay-what-you-can donations entry scheme, an adopt an object scheme, and paid-for activities. These have not proved to be sufficient on their own to close the budget gap to the net spending level on the Museum of Oxford set by this Council.</p>

<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Mundy queried that if no resource is given to revenue creating ideas, how can the Council say that ways of increasing revenue were given a fair trial.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown responded in Councillor Hollingsworth's absence and committed to providing a written response.</p> <p><b>Written Response</b> Additional resource has been allocated to the following revenue creating options: increasing room hire; increasing philanthropy and donations and creating a Friends scheme. A part-time post has been funded via the Museum Renewal Fund to deliver this. The options where resource wasn't committed were for the following which were not deemed viable both from a logistical and a cost-benefit perspective: a) creating a new exhibition space for ticketed exhibitions and b) converting space for a family play area – these options were discarded as the only available space is needed for staff offices/equipment storage/CCTV etc. The other option which was discarded was using the museum as a space for parties due to out of hours staffing costs, and risks regarding safeguarding, health and safety and possible damage to the museum's collections</p>
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<p><b>AH2: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Templars Square and the surrounding infrastructure has long needed redeveloping. The crumbling buildings and long vacant units are not good enough for Cowley Centre and its residents. Is the cabinet member keeping in contact with the site owner Redevco and pushing for progress on plans to redevelop Templars Square?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> The City Council is in constant dialogue with the site owner Redevco around redevelopment of Templars Square. The developer is exploring funding options to bring the redevelopment of the site forward, given financial challenges in the development market. The City Council is supporting this process, including introductions to Homes England. The City Council's ambition is for complete redevelopment of Templars Square as a thriving modern district centre for Cowley, along with a significant increase in homes provided on the site.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Mundy asked if Redevco is the only site owner for the area, or whether there are also others. It</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

was asked whether discussions relating to redevelopment could be opened with other landowners.

Councillor Brown responded in Councillor Hollingsworth's absence and clarified that the City Council is the freeholder, but Redevco is the main contact for the site.

### AH3: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Hollingsworth

#### Question

Templars Square, granted it's 60 years old, aged quickly. The layout does not suit the modern shopping and community needs of a bustling community centre like Cowley. Does the cabinet member agree that any future redevelopment at Templars Square needs to be fit for the future, moving away from car-centric design and closed alleyways to open spaces and pedestrian friendly place making?

#### Written Response

Yes.

The City Council's ambition is for complete redevelopment of Templars Square as a fully regenerated and modern district centre for Cowley that is fit for the future and meets the needs of current and future residents. The current and emerging Local Plans highlight the importance of Templars Square as a district centre focused around people and not vehicles. The City Council is working with the developer to ensure this is the underlying principle of any future development.

#### Supplementary Question

None.

#### Verbal Response

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### AH4: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Hollingsworth

#### Question

What is the portfolio holder doing to advance progress on plans to redevelop Templars Square Shopping Centre?

#### Written Response

The City Council is in constant dialogue with the site owner Redevco around redevelopment of Templars Square  
See answers to previous questions on this issue.

#### Supplementary Question

None.

#### Verbal Response

**AH5: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Hollingsworth****Question**

How complete and accurate is the footfall data held by City Council in relation to visits to the Museum of Oxford

**Written Response**

Data held since 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 is complete and accurate. Footfall is directly related to tickets sold for general entry, and attendance numbers at events.

Before that the footfall counting methods were ad hoc and variant, and totals involved adding together separate figures without taking into account possible duplication. The numbers given as visitor numbers were therefore maximum estimates rather than actual numbers of visitors. It is not possible to measure the degree of duplication at different points.

Prior to redevelopment of the Museum there were laser counters on two separate areas in the Town Hall containing items and exhibitions which are now brought together within the Museum. Daily movements through these two separate doors were each halved – to account for entrance and exit – and then added together with a manual count of visitors at the Museum for a total which was then published as the total number of visitors to the Museum.

This did not account for one person visiting the separate places that were being treated as parts of the Museum and attending an event as part of the same visit, thus providing a footfall implying three visitors when it was in fact a single visitor. The laser counters also did not account for multiple movements backwards and forwards through a door by one person, thus treating a single person as potentially several people.

After the reopening of the Museum in October 2021 following Covid there was a system of making a manual count of visitors entering the Museum, and this number was added to the number of people attending any events held during that day. This means that for any event during normal opening hours a single visitor could be counted more than once.

In summary the figures from January of this year are accurate and complete and can be relied on. Figures prior to that are not as reliable, but the degree to which single visits were duplicated or triplicated – or more –

is not possible to estimate. Figures from prior to 2026 should be treated with caution and will be to some extent an inflated figure of the actual number of visitors.

**Supplementary Question**  
None.

**Verbal Response**

**AH6: From Cllr Yeatman to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

What benchmarks will be used to determine whether the Covered Market redevelopment delivers measurable economic benefits for local traders rather than primarily attracting new operators?

**Written Response**

The Covered Market has over its 250 years of history always attracted new traders. Customers' needs and wants evolve, and new traders with new ideas and new products to sell come forward to test the waters. Change is what makes any market successful.

The existing Covered Market Leasing Strategy is clear that the City Council will "encourage occupation by sole traders, independents and local retailers", and will select new tenants based on factors including their local connections. Assignment of leases to high street chains will not be permitted. That will not change at all, leaving the Covered Market as a place where local entrepreneurs can establish and build their businesses. The main benchmark to be used to measure the success of the Covered Market redevelopment will be the demand from local traders to lease the units. At present this demand for units exceeds supply, and the aim is for that to continue.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Yeatman asked whether any of the existing Covered Market traders would face higher rents as a result of the redevelopment, and if so, how many.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Brown responded in Councillor Hollingsworth's absence and explained that the rent policy is revisited regularly; it is not expected that the redevelopment is an influencing factor on the rent policy. It was noted that the Council has invested a separate budget in the refurbishments.

<b>AH7: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b>            Within the 2025/26 budget, Oxford City Council identifies a £250,000 projected loss in revenue from council-run car parks.</p> <p>Since the introduction of the congestion-related traffic measures, will the portfolio holder publish the monthly revenue figures for each council-run car park, including the figures from the 12 months prior to the scheme, so councillors and residents can clearly assess the financial impact?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The £250k has been included in 2026-27 as a corporate contingency for City Council run car parks as a whole – it is not a loss in revenue, but a more cautious assumption of an increase in the revenue base budget. The overall base budget for car park income was increased by £650k, as opposed to the £900k increase proposed in the Consultation Budget. It is difficult to forecast the impact the congestion charge may have on car parking income from the limited data so far available and the number of variables. The advice of officers to members when Full Council set its budget that this was an appropriate degree of caution given the lack of certainty based on such a short period of data collection.</p> <p>The Council does not normally publish income from individual car parks because the Agresso system is not designed to do so; any variance in portfolio income is shown through the quarterly budget monitoring reports to Cabinet.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b>            None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<b>AH8: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<p><b>Question</b>            Does the fall in car-park revenue also reflect reduced city-centre footfall?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The usage figures on the city centre car parks based on tickets sold in January 2026 are showing there is a 16% decrease when compared with the same period last year.</p> <p>This doesn't necessarily equate to a 16% reduction in income because there are different tariff bands and these might be impacted in different ways – for example a reduced number of tickets sold but longer stays might not result in a decline in overall revenue.</p>

	As noted in the following question, the City Council does not currently have access to footfall data that can be considered reliable.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH9: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Footfall data for the city was previously published but no longer appears to be publicly available. Could the portfolio holder explain why those figures are no longer published, and whether the Council will resume publishing them?	<b>Written Response</b> Huq, the company who are currently the City Council's providers of footfall data, have confirmed that there have been accuracy issues with the platform that they are using, particularly for year-on-year change. When these concerns about data accuracy came to light in mid-2025 the City Council paused publication of data which could not be relied on to be wholly accurate. The City Council have been attempting for some time to get Huq to resolve these issues so that the data can be relied on, but this has not been successful. The City Council is therefore now seeking another provider for footfall data and will resume publishing it as soon as that provider is contracted and in place.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

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<b>AH10: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder set out whether the City Council is doing all it can to work with the County	<b>Written Response</b> This is not a planning matter. In planning terms a Local Planning Authority, such as the City Council, may only require planning permission where the

<p>Council to get a more equitable dropped kerb policy in place when residents apply to the City for Planning Permission to convert? We know that current specs cause serious problems for residents wheeling or who have challenges walking, and there is a known solution with Dutch-style entry kerbs.</p>	<p>dropped kerb is going onto a classified road. The type of kerb is not something that can be specified in a granting of planning permission, as the specifications for kerbs are set by the Highways Authority, in this case Oxfordshire County Council.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>AH11: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder confirm whether the council has signed a contract for the construction of the proposed Oxpens Bridge?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> The contract has been signed by the contractor.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Muddiman requested confirmation that the contract had been signed on the day of this meeting.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown confirmed it had been signed by the Council earlier that day.</p>

<p><b>AH12: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder set out what evidence the council has regarding the demand for life science space in Oxford?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> The Oxford Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) provides the evidence on the market, demand and supply of employment land for the emerging Local Plan. The ELNA found Oxford is an attractive location in terms of the Laboratory and Research and Development market, and therefore considerable demand for new space for these industries. Important factors include having two world class universities, a number of research hospitals, the investments of Oxford Science Enterprises, and the market response to</p>

	Oxford's leading role in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and corresponding enhanced international reputation.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Muddiman requested evidence and statistics.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown responded in Councillor Hollingsworth's absence and referred Councillor Muddiman to the needs assessment referenced in the written response.

<b>AH13: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> The employment space on the proposed Oxpens development is big enough to accommodate approximately 6,000 jobs. Given the current housing crisis in Oxford, does the portfolio agree that the council should be working to ensure that there is a more joined-up approach to ensuring that the number of new jobs created through employment space mirrors the number of new houses?	<b>Written Response</b> For many years the so called 'County Towns' approach to strategic planning in Oxfordshire was based on a fundamentally flawed assumption that somehow the city as an attractive place for jobs could be wished away. Pretending that economic growth would not happen, even as the evidence it was happening and could not be prevented was obvious, meant that housing in sufficient numbers was not provided in and immediately around the city of Oxford. The result of this strategic planning error was a housing affordability crisis that is impacting on a huge proportion of ordinary families in Oxford, and a congestion and environmental crisis caused by forcing many of those families to live miles outside the place where their jobs were and have to commute back in to what had been and should still be their home city. So rather than repeating the same error by pretending that jobs can be wished away, this City Council and whichever body succeeds it in two years' time should be following a joined-up approach that supports building the number of houses to meet the number of jobs that already exist and will be created by economic growth that is already happening.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**AH14: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

Can the portfolio holder explain how an employment to housing ratio of approximately 6:1 on a central Oxford site would affect the numbers of commuters coming into Oxford?

**Written Response**

Employment cannot be wished away, and will either happen here on this site which is ideally centrally located with the best public transport capacity in Oxfordshire, or somewhere else close by but not as well connected. What is required is the tens of thousands of homes that have been prevented in and around Oxford through imagining that reality can be ignored.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

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**AH15: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

Given the cost of living crisis and the rise in energy bills, will the portfolio holder reconsider some of the restrictions on installing new doors, windows and solar PV in conservation areas?

**Written Response**

New doors, windows and solar panels can be installed within most conservation areas without the need for planning permission as long as they meet the nationally set criteria for size and scale as set out in the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*.

The exceptions are in the Osney Island and Jericho Conservation Areas where Article 4 Directions removes some Permitted Development Rights and requires planning permission for changes to windows and doors. The Article 4 Direction also ensures that these are appropriate to meet the key elements of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Solar panels can be installed under permitted development provided they meet relevant conditions which include being sited as far as is practicable to reduce their visual impact. In some cases, the only practical option will be on the front roof slope.

Where planning permission is required, the Council are supportive of householders needs to improve the energy of their homes. When a

	<p>property lies within a conservation area, the objective is to help achieve this aim whilst responding sensitively to the character and appearance of the property and area. There are many ways to enhance the energy efficiency of buildings and many options to upgrade the thermal properties of windows and doors in a sensitive manner, as well as incorporating renewable energy technology. Subject to good design, many of these suggestions can be incorporated within buildings in conservation areas. In addition to Technical Advice Note 15 (Heritage Retrofit Guidance: Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction) the Council has drafted a suite of design guidance that seeks to set out what can be done under permitted development and how some of these options can be undertaken sensitively.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>AH16: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Hollingsworth</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> I note the powers of access conferred on immigration enforcement under the section 179 of the Licensing Act 2003, as amended by the Immigration Act 2016. Can the portfolio holder please confirm that the council is only using this power to enter properties as per its legal obligations, and not additionally involved in disclosures to immigration enforcement in regard to its licensing functions?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> Licensing officers only use powers in the Licensing Act 2003 to carry out the council's legal functions as set out in the Act, as amended. Immigration crime is a relevant matter for the purposes of the Act. Where there is a suspicion that immigration offences are occurring within a licensed premises, officers will inform the Home Office, police and other relevant partners.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Powell requested confirmation that all disclosures are required by law, and that there are not voluntary ones.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Brown responded in Councillor Hollingsworth's absence and committed to writing with a response.</p> <p><b>Written Response</b></p>

Incidents of suspected immigration offences in licensed premises are reported to relevant partners, including the Home Office, to uphold the Licensing Act 2003 objectives. Licensing officers are fulfilling these obligations in their professional capacity. It is unclear what a "voluntary" disclosure would be.

**AH17: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

Can the portfolio holder please confirm whether immigration enforcement have been invited to attend licensing enforcement visits outside of contexts where there is a legal obligation upon the council to extend such an invite?

**Written Response**

The General Licensing Team's duty under the Licensing Act 2003 to uphold the licensing objectives includes addressing immigration offences perpetrated within licensed premises. The General Licensing Team do not invite immigration enforcement teams to attend scheduled compliance operations. Immigration enforcement invites the General Licensing Team to attend their operations when they are attending licenced premises within our local authority area for the purposes set out in the Licensing Act 2003.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

**AH18: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Hollingsworth**

**Question**

Can the portfolio holder please provide an update on discussions regarding the possibility of an Oxford Accommodation Business Improvement District? I note the council's limited role, but any further details on developments since July 2025 would be appreciated.

**Written Response**

In the last 8 months the City Council have established Tourism Task Groups with both the hoteliers and separately those colleges who would be covered by an ABID. A detailed list of visitor improvement projects that an ABID might support is now being finalised. The aim is to reach a point over the next few months where the preparation work will be completed and the different bodies involved can decide whether or not to create an ABID – please note that the City Council does NOT have any say in the matter,

only the bodies that would be paying the charges. We are simply playing a convening role.  
 The Government has announced consultation on an Overnight Visitor Levy. At present this could only be introduced by a Strategic Authority – such as the possible Thames Valley Strategic Authority that is being considered. It may also require an elected Mayor before any such levy could begin, and again the City Council would not be the decision maker.

<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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**AH19: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth**

<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio officer outline how often planning applications feature inaccuracies on plans? How often are these missed by the planning authority when first approved?	<b>Written Response</b> The City Council Planning Department do not specifically collate that sort of data. It would only be on rare occasions whereby a specific inaccuracy in an application was missed by the officers involved in the Development Management process.
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<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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**AH20: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth**

<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder set out what action the council takes to ensure inaccuracies on planning applications are not missed?	<b>Written Response</b> The application form requires the applicant to make a declaration that the plans accompanying the application are accurate. Planning officers undertake site visits to assess planning applications and that includes reviewing the plans on site.
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	The identification of an inaccuracy prior to approval can depend on the scale of the inaccuracy and also whether it is brought to the officers' attention.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH21: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder explain how the council holds applicants to account for submitting inaccurate plans, especially where the results mean the development does not meet the considerations and conditions set out in the planning application?	<b>Written Response</b> The council investigates any alleged breach of planning control. If an inaccuracy is identified, then we will review that against the approved permission, and the matter will be reviewed by our enforcement team. Where a breach has occurred then consideration is given to what course of action is needed to remedy the breach of control. The council will take enforcement action to address such breaches. This was the case with the successful enforcement of the unauthorised development at 1 Quarry High Street. This enforcement notice that was upheld on appeal and also in the high court.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH22: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder explain how the council support residents who are affected by inaccurate plans being approved and ensure they receive proportional compensation for harm caused?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council investigates breaches of planning control as mentioned in the previous answer.

	Should a resident feel that they have grounds for pursuing either the City Council or a developer for compensation following a breach of planning control then they would need to take appropriate independent legal advice.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH23: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>																					
<p><b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder set out how many reports of potential breaches in planning control have been reported to us in each of the last 3 years, and what proportion of planning enforcement investigations have resulted in: negotiation on remedial works or alterations to the development; an invitation for a retrospective planning application for the works; a decision that the breach is minor in nature or would be granted planning permission and take no further action take formal enforcement action?</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b></p> <p>The table below sets out the number of alleged breaches the of planning control that the planning enforcement Team have investigated for the last 3 years. The regulations of planning enforcement are clear that the preferred outcomes are resolution through voluntary action or retrospective planning application, and that enforcement action is only justified if the harm of the planning breach outweighs any harm that would arise from the enforcement action.</p> <p>The data shows the number of those cases within the last three years where the breach was resolved through negotiation resulting in a voluntary action by the property/landowner to make changes to address the breach of planning control, the number of breaches resolved through the submission of a retrospective planning application, and the number of cases closed where it was decided that it was not expedient to pursue formal enforcement action and where no voluntary resolution or a retrospective application could be secured.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="987 1163 1850 1399"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2025</th> <th>2024</th> <th>2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total number of cases received</td> <td>353</td> <td>336</td> <td>320</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Voluntary action</td> <td>62</td> <td>71</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retrospective planning application</td> <td>59</td> <td>68</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not expedient</td> <td>45</td> <td>67</td> <td>48</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2025	2024	2023	Total number of cases received	353	336	320	Voluntary action	62	71	41	Retrospective planning application	59	68	34	Not expedient	45	67	48
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<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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<b>AH24: From Cllr Rawle to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder set out how many reports of breaches in planning control are currently being investigated, how many are outstanding and what is the average length of time for the council to resolve reported breaches?	<b>Written Response</b> Currently, there are 319 open planning enforcement investigations. Due to the wide-ranging nature of planning enforcement breaches, the City Council does not specifically collate the average length of time planning enforcement investigations take across a given period. If there are/is a specific case(s) that the Member wishes to know about then details can be provided for the length of time that case was open and the number of hours spent by officers investigating and resolving any breach.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>AH25: From Cllr Robinson to Cllr Hollingsworth</b>	
<b>Question</b> Could the portfolio holder confirm the exact shortfall in the museum income and total running costs for the last two financial years? There seems some confusion in previous figures shared and opacity in the budget, which sometimes appears to conflate Town Hall running costs and Museum running costs.	<b>Written Response</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The museum income shortfall against the income budget in 2024-25 of £151,750 was <b>£46,121</b></li> <li>• The museum expenditure overspend against the directly controllable expenditure budget of £293,617 in 2024-25 was <b>£30,940</b></li> <li>• The variance to controllable budget in 2024-25 was therefore the income shortfall plus the overspend, so a total of <b>£77,061</b></li> <li>• After the allocation of an appropriate share of overhead support costs for central City Council internal functions such as HR, Finance</li> </ul>

and the like, which are not directly controllable but are real costs, the total (controllable & uncontrollable) expenditure budget in 2024-25 was £326,231 and the total overspend was **£120,586**

- In monitoring reports & Cabinet reporting controllable costs are reported, and the uncontrollable costs are excluded.
- The museum income surplus against the income budget in 2023-24 of £138,750 was **£1,706**
- The museum expenditure underspend against the directly controllable expenditure budget of £392,717 in 2023-24 was **£89,417**
- The expenditure underspend against the total controllable & uncontrollable expenditure budget of £425,331 in 2023-24 was **£91,228**
- In summary therefore across the two years the income of the Museum fell from **£140,456** in 2023-4 to **£105,629** in 2024-5 - which is a decline in income of **£34,827** compared to a planned budget increase in income of **£13,000**
- Across the two years the controllable expenditure for the Museum rose from **£303,300** to **£324,557**, which is an increase in controllable expenditure of **£21,257** compared to a planned budget reduction in controllable expenditure of **£99,100**. This budget reduction in controllable expenditure was a reversal of the additional short-term costs budget agreed on the opening the museum.
- Across the two years the net deficit, taking into account both income and controllable expenditure, of the Museum increased from a net deficit of **£162,844** in **2023/24** to a net deficit of **£218,928** in **2024/25**

<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>
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**Cabinet Member for a Healthy, Fairer Oxford and Small Business Champion**

44

<b>CM1: From Cllr Fouweather to Cllr Munkonge</b>	
<b>Question</b> Further to my question at the November 24th Council, many basketball courts in Council run parks in Oxford still have damaged or missing nets on the basketball hoops. Can the Cabinet Member ensure that all sports nets in the Parks are checked immediately and repaired or replaced where needed?	<b>Written Response</b> Colleagues within Oxford Direct Services are in the process of replacing the nets where needed across the City. Most recently the nets at Alexandra Courts have been replaced and Cutteslowe and Sunnymede and Bury Knowle park nets are programmed to be replaced within the next two weeks.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

**CM2: From Cllr Gant to Cllr Munkonge****Question**

What progress can the Cabinet member report in respect of the lease of the cricket nets in Cutteslowe Park?

**Written Response**

We have been working closely with Wolvercote Cricket club, who have since requested whether additional facilities could be added into the work on this. A draft demise plan has been agreed in principle, with revised Heads of Terms incorporating these potential changes currently being amended for distribution shortly to the club for their review and agreement.

**Supplementary Question**

None.

**Verbal Response**

45

**CM3: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Munkonge****Question**

When will Hinksey pool open for the 2026 season?

**Written Response**

Unfortunately, during the preparations for the new Hinksey Pool season, the plant room at the facility flooded causing damage to electrical systems and also to mechanical equipment which included the pool pumps. The Council's leisure contractor is working hard behind the scenes to identify the necessary timelines to rectify the damaged equipment and be clear about the timelines necessary for opening. We will ensure that members are updated as soon as we have firm assurances on the opening date.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Miles asked whether since publication of this response, there has been any further update on the opening date.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Munkonge noted that there was no update, and the expected opening date remained as mid-May.

**Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities**

**LS1: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Smith****Question**

How many Right-to-Buy requests did the City Council receive in November and December 2024, immediately after the announcement of the reduction in the RTB discount? For comparison, how many did it receive in the same period of 2023 and 2025? How long have RTB applications made in these respective periods taken to complete?

**Written Response**

Between the date of the announcement of the changes, 30th October 2024 and 21st November 2024, there were 168 applications. For the same three-week periods in 2023 there was one application and in the same three-week period 2025 there was only one application.

Applications 2023-24 - 66  
 Applications 2024-25 - 239  
 Applications 2025-26 – 26

RTB applications should be processed with a decision being made to Admit or Deny the RTB within 28 days of receipt of the application. In common with other Local Authorities, we did operate a backlog for a period with additional resources being brought in to deal with the unprecedented numbers. The backlog within the Applications Team was cleared in January 2025.

**Supplementary Question**

Councillor Smowton asked whether the Council is familiar with any delays being brought about following the Chancellor's recent changes.

**Verbal Response**

Councillor Smith noted they were not.

**LS2: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Smith****Question**

I have been told that there are delays in the OCC Tenancy Team confirming records of tenancy transfers/ inherited tenancies/ succeeded tenancies. It's impacting peoples' benefits, as up to date information fails to be provided for the purposes of establishing entitlement for housing costs on benefits.

**Written Response**

Officers are not aware of any particular delays with dealing with succession cases. Relevant checks have to be made to evidence that succession eligibility criteria are met. If the member could pass on details of any specific cases, I will ask officers to investigate

<p>This in turn leads to rent not being paid on time and arrears owed to OCC.</p> <p>Why are there these delays and what is being done to resolve this?</p>	
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>LS3: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Smith</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> When will the roof at Littlemore Community Centre be repaired? There has been a long-standing leak and fungal growth is now visible near the affected area, which raises concerns for users of the building.</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> There are asbestos containing materials in the roof void, these are in the process of being safely removed by a competent contractor and are planned for the end of March. Once that has taken place the roof repairs will be booked in carried out in the following week. We are working with the committee to ensure the works cause as little disruption as possible.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<p><b>LS4: From Cllr Mundy to Cllr Smith</b></p>	
<p><b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder explain why there are delays in reporting of tenancy transfers/ inherited tenancies/ succeeded tenancies? This is impacting on people's benefits.</p>	<p><b>Written Response</b> Officers are not aware of any particular delays with dealing with succession cases. Relevant checks have to be made to evidence that succession eligibility criteria are met. If the member could pass on details of any specific cases, I will ask officers to investigate.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b> None.</p>	<p><b>Verbal Response</b></p>

<b>LS5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder please outline under what circumstances the details of homeless people within Oxford City are shared with immigration enforcement?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council does not share information collected from people accessing homelessness services with the Home Office for purposes of immigration enforcement. The Council and its commissioned service providers would only speak to the Home Office with a client's explicit consent.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS5: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the portfolio holder please confirm whether any details of homeless people are shared with immigration enforcement outside of legal obligations upon the council to provide such details?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council does not share information collected from people accessing homelessness services with the Home Office for purposes of immigration enforcement. The Council and its commissioned service providers would only speak to the Home Office with a client's explicit consent.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS6: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Can the responsible member please confirm whether and in what circumstances details of residents who have accessed housing advice are shared with immigration enforcement?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council does not share information collected from people accessing homelessness services with the Home Office for purposes of immigration enforcement.

	The Council and its commissioned service providers would only speak to the Home Office with a client's explicit consent.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> None.	<b>Verbal Response</b>

<b>LS7: From Cllr Powell to Cllr Smith</b>	
<b>Question</b> Recent reports have detailed sharp rises in vacancy rates in purpose-built student accommodation in the UK. Can the portfolio holder confirm whether she is aware of any similar uptick in vacancy rates within Oxford City over the past 12 months?	<b>Written Response</b> The Council does not collect information on occupancy rates in student accommodation.
<b>Supplementary Question</b> Councillor Powell asked, given the state of the housing crisis in Oxford, whether the Cabinet Member would undertake to write to providers of student housing to obtain information non their occupancy rates.	<b>Verbal Response</b> Councillor Smith referred Councillor Powell to the Cabinet Member for Planning.

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