

Supplement for

Council

On **Monday 15 July 2024** At **5.00 pm**

Minutes Supplement

Contents

17.	Questions on Notice from Members of Council	3 - 30
	Attached to these minutes are 14 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting.	
18.	Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting	31 - 40
	Council heard five addresses and one question from members of the public. Attached are the written responses from Cabinet Members which were read out during the meeting.	

The agenda, reports and any additional supplements can be found together with this supplement on the [committee meeting webpage](#).

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To: Council
Date: 15 July 2024
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Cabinet Members and Leader

Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Cabinet members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.
2. Responses are included where available.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the Cllr answering the original question.
4. This report will be republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.
5. Unfamiliar terms may be briefly explained in footnotes.

Questions and responses

Cabinet Member for Partnership Working; Leader of the Council

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

<p><i>is it not possible to have two people who work closely together and are indeed good friends and travel together around the world, speaking together in the name of peace?</i></p>	<p><i>Speak would be incredibly interesting, and I'm sure it would be something that we could all welcome. However, three minutes at the start of a Council meeting, which is all we have granted to anybody else to speak on these issues, does not feel that it would be sufficient. And, if we were to make a much longer period than that, then we would be eating into Council business time, and potentially making a very long meeting of it. So, I just do not think that this is the right forum for this type of proposal, but I do think that your proposal for a public meeting is something that we could offer support to.</i></p>
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<p>SB3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Brown – Action plan for reduction in Child Poverty</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The paper on voluntary adaption of the socio-economic duty was agreed at cabinet in March 2024 after the Scrutiny Committee carried out a review of child poverty and this council agreed a motion to take steps to try and reduce the number of children living in poverty in our city. What is the timeline for the publication of the detailed implementation and action plan?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Cabinet committed to full implementation of the socio-economic duty (SED) within the 2024/25 Council year, and this is on track.</p> <p>While officers are still finalising the comprehensive Action Plan, individual actions, initiatives, and programmes are already delivering a commitment towards the SED. This is because the Council's strategic approach to policy already had significant regard to promoting inclusion and tackling economic inequalities; and because the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process is already in place.</p>

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

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

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

	<p>our new AQ website OXONAIR: https://www.oxonair.uk/, and they cover all the areas where ZEZ is expected to expand</p> <p>Oxford City Council has the statutory duty (given by Env Protection Act 1995) of reporting on an annual basis on the status of air pollution in the city every year in June. Air Quality levels (including the ones at the sites covered by the ZEZ expansion) will continue to be reported on an annual basis, as part of this statutory duty and the air pollution levels will also continue to be uploaded onto the new OXONair website.</p> <p>Oxford City Council will also continue to provide support to Oxfordshire County Council on the assessment of the specific air quality impacts of any current and future transport schemes delivered.</p>
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AR2: From Cllr Henwood to Cllr Railton – City Council’s NO2 targets	
Question	Written Response
<p>Does the city council still subscribe to the "local annual mean NO2 target of 30 µg/m3 by 2025 (30 by 25) - or has it now shifted to an ambitious target?</p>	<p>As far as we are aware, Oxford City Council is the only UK local authority in the country to set its own local annual mean Target of NO2 -30ug/m3 - one that is much more stringent than the current UK annual mean legal target of 40ug/m3.</p> <p>In its Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2021-2025 the Council has committed to achieve this target across the city by December 2025, and is on track to do so.</p> <p>A new AQAP will need to be prepared in 2025 with a fresh set of air quality measures which will need to be agreed between the Council and its partners, to continue to reduce air pollution levels in the city for the new period 2026-2030.</p> <p>Any future decision on a potential new local annual mean NO2 target for the city will form part of this process.</p>

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

Supplementary Question

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

Verbal Response

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

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

<p>NC1: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman - Cornmarket waste rubbish</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>What timings does the council stipulate businesses on Cornmarket are allowed to put out their rubbish for waste collection and what are the requirements as to where they place this to ensure the pavement is not blocked for pedestrians in the evenings? What actions has the council taken to enforce the correct timings and location of waste to be removed from businesses on cornmarket in the late evenings/ early mornings?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Businesses and organisations are able to place their waste for collection after 18:00 hours. This can be collected up to 10:00 hours in Cornmarket Street.</p> <p>There is no specific requirement as to where they exactly place their waste, but it is broadly in agreement with their waste collection provider. It is in practice normally placed in front of their business.</p> <p>Waste receptacles are not used on Cornmarket Street as waste bags once collected mean the street is clear, allowing free access for pedestrians and there are no bins left to cause problems or a security issue.</p> <p>Council officers visit businesses, advise on how to present waste in the correct bags or as recyclable side waste and issue legal notices for non-compliance.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Yes, thank you. I was shocked when I walked through Cornmarket after attending an event in the theatre in Oxford, to see the huge numbers of bin bags piled high outside all of the premises on Cornmarket. It really affects the public community of the space and the nighttime economy. Do we find it acceptable that these bin bags are piled</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>Most of the businesses close at 6 pm, so they've got to put their stuff out by that time. They can't put it out later, because they aren't open for business past that hour. Rubbish collection is then in the early hours of the morning, by ODS and other services. This takes place between 6 am and 8 – 8:30 am. I can explore whether or not they can collect the</i></p>

<p><i>high from 6 in the evening to the middle of the night, which can contribute to pest issues and is unsightly, so are you willing to work together to find options to ensure and improve the Public community space on Cornmarket, whilst managing some of the waste issues?</i></p>	<p><i>rubbish in the evening, but it is unlikely that it would be commercially viable for ODS or other providers to pick the bin bags up in the evening. It is unlikely that our providers for this service would be able to create a special round to pick up the rubbish in the evening, when they normally do it in the morning.</i></p>
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<p>NC2: From Cllr Miles to Cllr Chapman - Waste management enforcement of city centre food retail businesses</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>What actions has the city council taken to work with city centre food retail shops, cafes and restaurants to reduce the amount of daily food packaging waste being placed in piles of bin bags on the city's pavements impacting the public amenity in the evenings, as well as impacting the environment?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>As in response NC1, Council officers will visit premises if issues come to light about their waste management. We start by giving verbal advice and warnings, and then if they are ignored issue legal notices to how the waste is stored and presented.</p> <p>The Council served 51 Section 47 notices on businesses who do not present their waste in an appropriate way in Oxford between January 1st 2023 to date.</p> <p>With regard to the type of waste presented, the Council's Street Trading Policy has a licence condition for street traders which does not allow single use plastic packaging. The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) (England) Regulations 2023 are enforced by Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards. Should concerns about the use of single use plastic packaging by street traders arise, licensing officers will, in the first instance, refer complaints to the County's Trading Standards team.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Given the amount of waste being produced by some of these retail premises, I'm thinking of places such as the milkshake shops, how can we work with these vendors to reduce the sheer volume of waste that they are producing and that is impacting the public</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>There are measures available, as I said in my answer. There are obligations placed on businesses, which I have laid out in my written response. If there are concerns about the enforcement of those trading standards, then that is not our issue. That needs to be reported to the</i></p>

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

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

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

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

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

Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Question

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

Written Response

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

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

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

Supplementary Question

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

Verbal Response

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

<p><i>are going to actually have some more of our children from the areas that are poorly served having access to swimming. Is it possible to have some more thought given to how we do that, because I do think that is a real change that is going to impact how many children actually get access to swimming, especially with the summer holidays coming up.</i></p>	
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<p>CM6: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Munkonge – Repair to Tumbling Bay Bathing space (1)</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The friends of Tumbling Bay addressed this council and were warmly received and encouraged to explore options to repair Tumbling Bay Bathing space with officers.</p> <p>Their preferred option is for the concrete wall to be replaced with steel piling, in keeping with other parts of the pool.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder explain the following:</p> <p>Why the council still intends to go ahead using gabion baskets to repair the wall?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The gabion basket design was determined as the most appropriate solution from the surveys that were carried out two years ago by the design team. After the continuous wet weather, officers have asked consultants to carry out a further structural survey. The inspection has found that degradation is worse than expected, partly due to the prolonged high river levels that have been experienced in recent months. Given this decline in condition, officers have requested a re-evaluation of options, including an option to incorporate Tumbling Bay Preservation Society’s desired option of sheet piling.</p>

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

<p>Can the portfolio holder explain the following:</p> <p>Why the council will not make a commitment to use Steel piling, so that the Friends of Tumbling Bay can confidently fundraise for the difference in costs?</p>	
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<p>CM8: From Cllr Muddiman to Cllr Munkonge – Repair to Tumbling Bay Bathing space (3)</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>The friends of Tumbling Bay addressed this council and were warmly received and encouraged to explore options to repair Tumbling Bay Bathing space with officers.</p> <p>Their preferred option is for the concrete wall to be replaced with steel piling, in keeping with other parts of the pool.</p> <p>Can the portfolio holder explain the following:</p> <p>Why the council is planning to repair Longbridges with steel piling, yet still plans to repair Tumbling Bay with Gabion baskets?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>The two sites in question have different needs for repair and reinstatement. These have been evaluated on an individual basis by a team of specialist engineers, who have provided the recommended solutions to the individual issues. Gabions were the most appropriate solution with the information previously available, and sheet piling will now also be considered as an option for Tumbling Bay.</p>
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>Will the Cllr accept my thanks and that of the Tumbling Bay Preservation Society, for the change in looking at Tumbling Bay and how it is going to be.</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>Thank you.</i></p>

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

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

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

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

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

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

	<p>Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council’s Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
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<p>LS4: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Green Square run flats in Jane Seaman Court</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of uncut grass and boarded up front door of flats in Green Square run Jane Seaman court - this has been an ongoing issue despite residents paying a maintenance charge. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the partnership agreement or in the absence of that action as a rogue landlord?</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.</p> <p>Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord’s complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if the complaint is upheld, including</p>

	<p>requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.</p> <p>Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council's Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
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<p>LS5: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Peabody run property in Facon Close</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken lifts which affect disabled residents. Can the housing member raise the issue of mould in a Peabody run property in Facon Close - this has been an ongoing issue despite multiple enquiries to the customer care team. If the issue has been raised with no resolution would the council take steps to sanction the housing issue for falling foul of the of the partnership agreement or in the absence</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Consumer standards make clear Registered Providers are expected to work closely with their tenants and to take prompt action to deal with disrepair issues, including issues around damp and mould and in communal areas – particularly where this is impacting on disabled and other vulnerable tenants.</p>

<p>of that action as a rogue landlord?</p>	<p>Where a social housing tenant is dissatisfied with the response of their landlord regarding a disrepair issue they can submit a complaint following that landlord's complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied with the response, they can raise it with the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman may take action against the landlord if the complaint is upheld, including requests to take appropriate action to resolve, reviewing existing processes and asking the landlord to award compensation to the tenant. The Regulator of Social Housing is also notified of decisions by the Housing Ombudsman regarding any complaints which are upheld.</p> <p>Regarding serious disrepair causing significant hazards under the Housing Act 2004 Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, the Council's Residential Regulation Team can also investigate reports from Registered Provider tenants regarding disrepair in individual properties and be contacted on rrt@oxford.gov.uk or call 01865 252211. There are a couple of existing cases open which are being looked into. Where significant hazards exist, the Council can request repair works and may be able to use enforcement powers where landlord does not complete repairs. However, reports of poor cleanliness in common parts, uncut gardens or boarded up doors would not fall under the Housing Act 2004 powers.</p>
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<p>LS6: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Smith – Housing quality issues in Peabody run property on Celandine Place</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>We as the city council work in partnership with our housing associations. Many residents in my ward are unhappy with the conditions in their homes at times including health and safety issues such as mould and broken</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>All Registered Providers of social housing, including Peabody, GreenSquare and OCC, are expected to comply with the new consumer standards set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which came into force on 1/4/24, and</p>

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cabinet Member for Planning

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

<p>Question</p> <p>What enforcement action has been taken</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Advice is given as part of licensing visits</p>
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<p>against street traders for using non recycled packaging and plastic packaging since the introduction of the updated street trading policy?</p>	<p>but, to date, no enforcement action has been taken.</p> <p>Ahead of The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) (England) Regulations 2023 coming into force, licensing offices agreed that street traders could use up existing stocks. Increasingly, these stocks are running out and wholesale food business suppliers no longer sell non-compliant packaging.</p> <p>Note that whilst not using single-use plastics is an Oxford City Council licence condition, The Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc and Polystyrene Containers etc) (England) Regulations 2023 are enforced by Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards. Should concerns about the use of single use plastic packaging by street traders arise, licensing officers will, in the first instance, refer complaints to Trading Standards.</p>
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<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p><i>My understanding was that the policy of single use plastic or the ban on that for street trading was going to be implemented straightaway and that there was not going to be this grace period for traders. Based on earlier questions to council as well, I understood that licensing officers were starting to make enforcement visits. So it is surprising now that there has not been any enforcement action taken, since an earlier question that was asked around that. So I would just like some clarification, since our policy on single use plastics in street trading came in last September.</i></p>	<p>Verbal Response</p> <p><i>We agreed that vendors could use up existing stock, instead of throwing it away. After that, our enforcement officers try to engage and educate first, rather than pursuing heavy handed enforcement. But I'm informed that actually for enforcement, it should now be the trading standard at the county, not for our officers. So if there are issues or you are seeing a violation of the standards, that should be reported to trading standards at the county council.</i></p>
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<p>LU2: From Cllr Smowton to Cllr Upton – School Street Signage</p>	
<p>Question</p> <p>Will you join me in requesting the new Secretary of State for Transport to permit the use of illuminated school street signage in England (it is already permitted in Scotland), in order to</p>	<p>Written Response</p> <p>Street signs are a matter for the County Council, so perhaps Cllr Smowton would like to have a word with his colleagues... but if there is evidence that illumination</p>

improve school street signage prominence?	improves the efficacy of a school street sign then I will happily support Cllr Smowton's request, both to government for permission to use them and to the County Council to fund their installation.
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LU3: From Cllr Djafari-Marbini to Cllr Upton – Lack of compliance with traffic management plan at Spindleberry Close

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

<p><i>forthcoming? We are getting a lot of complaints about this matter.</i></p>	<p><i>annoying, so if they can find a good solution like this, then the sooner the better. I will find out for you. Actually, I am being informed, that it has already been implemented and hopefully the situation will be improving.</i></p>
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LU4: From Cllr Kerr to Cllr Upton – Oxford’s 10 View Cones

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

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

To: Council

Date: 15 July 2024

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions 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, 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 2 of the agenda

1. Address from Sushila Dhall, Chair, Oxford Pedestrians Association – Make Oxford a Truly Walkable City Motion
2. Question from Chaka Artwell – Cabinet Decision for the Request for Exceptional Circumstances Relief from the Community Infrastructure Levy
3. Address from Paul Peros, OxVox Chairman, Oxford United Supporters Trust – Oxford United Stadium Motion
4. Address from Chaka Artwell – Glyphosate
5. Address from Ashley Smith, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution – Support for Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford City River Action Plan
6. Address from Dan Glazebrook, Friends of Grandpont Nature Park – Oxpens River Bridge Scheme

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda

1. Address from Sushila Dhall, Chair, Oxford Pedestrians Association – Make Oxford a Truly Walkable City Motion

My name is Sushila Dhall, Chair of Oxford Pedestrians Association. OxPA has been lobbying for pedestrians and wheelchair use as forms of urban transport since the mid-1990's, almost 30 years ago, and yet progress has been slow, despite pedestrians having been declared top of the road users' hierarchy. We are good at policy-making when it comes to pedestrians, but not good at action. We are all pedestrians, even if we only walk to our bike, car or bus. To look at pavements you would think that we are just smaller, thinner cars, as walking and wheelchair use are provided for as if we move at a uniform pace, usually in single file. But pedestrian space is public space, and pedestrians move at varying speeds, may need to hold hands or an arm, want to talk to the people we are with without shouting over our shoulders. We need to pass people going more slowly than us, and in the other direction. There needs to be space for wheelchair users to pass one another in comfort and dignity. But pavements are usually too narrow, and obstructed by car parking, scooter and cycle parking, posts and poles, A boards, bins, overhanging vegetation and signs for road works and cars. Pavements are not level but sloped at entrances to prioritise motorised vehicles. Crossings take a long time to respond and then give a short time to cross. Routes are often broken up and crossings often indirect. Hythe Bridge St, the main station to city centre route suffers from all of the above, and pedestrians are forced frequently onto the road - whilst a recent survey of OxPA members showed that wheelchair users often cannot make it into town due to the challenges of getting there by wheelchair. Air pollution, noise and danger are everyday issues pedestrians put up with. So OxPA welcomes this motion, and I speak to support it - we need pavements 2-3m wide, level, unobstructed, and clean. We need responsive crossings on desire lines, raised to the level of the pavement, and pavement extensions across all side roads. Please support this motion for a future of happier and healthier urban walkers and wheelers in Oxford.

Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

We agree that pedestrians and wheelchair users are the top of the road users' hierarchy and that more could be done to improve their experience of getting around Oxford. Everybody wins if more people feel safe and comfortable walking more. We have widely acknowledged the need to re-prioritise road space and have embedded this in council strategies e.g. Local Plan and City Centre Action Plan.

Your address highlights some of the obstacles (both metaphorical and tangible) in the way of a good pedestrian experience. Yes, our city has predominantly narrow streets and therefore often exceedingly narrow pavements. And yes, the City Council has a role to play here.

However, all of the responsibilities identified in Cllr Morris's motion come with significant costs. In the financial climate of the last decade or more, the council has had decreasing budgets to install and manage things such as benches, water fountains, public toilets and wayfinding signage. Any additional investment would need to be considered in the budget process.

We cannot commit to 2-3m pavements everywhere due to the lack of space, but we wholeheartedly agree that we need to make more space for active travel users and shift focus away from the car, whilst still supporting public transport.

We also shouldn't lose sight of the progress that is being made locally on this topic, despite the challenging financial context: the recently delivered Market Street pedestrian-friendly trial scheme; the commitment to a permanent improvement of the pedestrian experience of St Michael's Street, the collaboration between our council and the County Council on the Central Oxfordshire Movement & Place Framework, which will create a blueprint for improvements in how people move about and enjoy the city – there is a strong focus on the pedestrian experience in this project, and this includes looking to address the journey from the train station to the city centre along Hythe Bridge Street, as flagged in your address.

And we should acknowledge the great work being done by OxPa. Your collaboration with the City Council, using money from a generous legacy donation will fund the supply, installation and maintenance of 15 additional benches, in various locations across the city. These locations were proposed by your members and by the members of public in areas identified as having a shortage of public seating options, including bus stops that have no seating availability, particularly important for older members of the public and those with mobility issues. The service agreement contract is being finalised and we anticipate the start of installation in the autumn.

Thank you for contributing to this motion and we look forward to working with you and others to improve the pedestrian experience of Oxford.

2. Question from Chaka Artwell – Cabinet Decision for the Request for Exceptional Circumstances Relief from the Community Infrastructure Levy

Concern and disquiet have been publicly expressed, following Cabinet Member Councillor Louise Upton's astonishing decision, revealed at the last Full Council meeting, to use her public office, to waive and not pursue BMW's £800,000 levy.

Are Oxford City Council Councillors concerned at the pusillanimous public behaviour of Cllr Upton, in creating a precedent by waving BMW's £800,000 levy; a precedent and policy, which is more galling considering BMW's \$54b valuation?

Will Oxford City Council's elected Councillors support Cllr Upton displaying the same consideration to Oxford's small and independent ethnic retail businesses on the Cowley Road, and the publicans; whose Local Authority Taxes, and Oxford City Council's support for anti-car policies, are pushing a significant number into insolvency?

Response from Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is charged when Planning Commission is given for new buildings in Oxford. I would like to point out several of our surrounding District Council do not charge CIL at all. Since 2019, there's been a process for applicants to request an exemption from this Levy. It's called the Discretionary Exceptional Circumstantial Relief and the process to apply for that relief is open for any development that is eligible. The procedures to be followed when requesting this exemption are laid out extensively in the CIL Regulations 2010 Part 6 Section 55 Paragraph 3(c) Part II.

If you are not familiar with the regulation, BMW Oxford applied for permission to build an extension to the existing factory in Cowley in order to bring the production of the Electric MINI to the UK. They also applied for and have received substantial UK government grant of around £60m to be directly invested into the development of that additional production line at Cowley.

I understand that not everyone follows all Council meetings so you may be taken by surprised of the announcement at the last Council. In fact, that decision was made after consideration at the Cabinet meeting on the 13th of March 2024. That was when the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services brought a paper about BMW's application to be granted this relief from the CIL charge that was due on their recently permitted factory extension. The paper was also considered by the Scrutiny Committee, which took place before that, on the 4th of March 2024.

To be eligible for that discretionary relief, BMW had to demonstrate that the development of that manufacturing of the additional car lines in that location was not economically viable. They met that test which had independently assessed viability reports. Bear in mind, they also had to meet this kind of test in order to get the much larger government grant of £600m, and again, they did that successfully.

Put simply, without the support from the public purse, the Electric MINI would not be developed in Oxford but would be built elsewhere in Europe instead resulting in the loss of many jobs from Oxford. You may have been happy to risk losing those jobs from Oxford but we were not.

With regard to your final points about helping the small businesses, I assume you were referring to whether the City Council can give discounts on business rates. Just a reminder that business rates are set nationally, not locally, so the City Council has no control over their level nor does it have any discretion to offer business rates reliefs. But if businesses do feel they've been impacted by local issues, they can appeal to the Government's Valuation Office Agency. I would encourage anybody who feels they have been impacted by circumstances to do that. In addition, Officers and Members have been working with businesses on Cowley Road in recent months and I have had several sessions to explore local issues. I believe these meetings have been positive and there is an agreement set by Local Traders Association as a next step. Thank you.

3. Address from Paul Peros, OxVox Chairman, Oxford United Supporters Trust – Oxford United Stadium Motion

Good afternoon.

My name is Paul Peros and I am chairman of the independent supporters trust OxVox.

Oxford United have a hundred and thirty year history in this County. We are known the world over as a club that grew from humble beginnings in a Headington pub to reach the highest division, in the most renowned and watched league in the world.

A club that won the league cup and qualified to play against the elite of Europe.

A club that turned Wembley yellow and blue once again this year and have been promoted to the Championship.

The club is an integral part of the county's identity, but we face being homeless within years.

The club however, now have owners with the vision, resources and experience to develop, not only a home for the club, but a hub for the whole county. One that reflects Oxfordshire's international standing and articulates our desire to be one of the greenest counties on the planet.

- We can move from an outdated unsustainable stadium, to a community hub that plans to provide up to 15% positive net carbon gain by partnering with progressive local companies to pioneer the latest green technologies.

- We can move from a stadium with little public transport that relies on 90% car usage, to a stadium with superb public transport links, with a projected car usage of just 10%.
- We can move from a three sided stadium, desperately in need of crippling expensive renovations and closed off to the community, to a stadium that will benefit the whole county.
- We can move from a stadium that is the second furthest in all the leagues from a train station, to one that would be second nearest. OxVox have provided a petition of support signed by well over 5,000 locals.

Every local sports club connected to Stratfield Brake actively supports this project and their members alone number in the thousands.

Asking how the club intend to safeguard the greenbelt, protect the environment and ensure traffic and parking are mitigated is completely understandable. These questions are being answered in planning and the club is laying out its vision to revitalise an unloved area of contaminated scrubland.

The local community deserve the chance to see a project undertaken that would provide infrastructure, jobs, and vitality to the area. A community hub that would not only free up brownfield space elsewhere in the county for much needed housing, but form part of a strengthened green belt around Kidlington.

The club have committed its vision to public scrutiny so that informed decisions can be made. The sea of happy faces filling the centre of Oxford for the parade gave witness to how many people care about this club. Our world renowned city prides itself on being at the forefront of technology, innovation and green thinking. This project offers the chance to reflect and advance those principals and make a positive contribution to the whole county. We can't let the vocal minority rob us of that chance.

Thank you for your time.

Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

We have a motion later in the agenda which I urge you to stay for.

We are certainly very committed to inspiring future for Oxford United. We were delighted to welcome the team here in our city. It was an emotional evening for all of us, we want to see more occasions like that, and we want to see a secure future for the club. Ideally to have community-based support of the new stadium, with the ownership being in the hands of the club.

Thank you very much for your address.

4. Address from Chaka Artwell – Glyphosate

Elected Councillors, this is the second time I have addressed Oxford City Council, calling for an immediate ban being levy against Oxford Direct Services, for spraying the herbicidal carcinogen glyphosate on Oxford's "roads, streets, hard surfaces, parks and play areas," in considerable quantities; even during the winter months.

Glyphosate harmful impact on human health is recognised in the judicial jurisdictions of many western nations, including the World Health Organisation.

For this reason, I am addressing Oxford City Council once again, as I believe within a decade, when our youth are suffering from various form of cancerous lymphoma, the source will be traced to Oxford City Council's wanton spraying-even during the winter months, of the herbicide Glyphosate.

A University of Washington review of numerous studies determined that glyphosate exposure may increase the risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma by up to 41% on 24th Jun 2024.

A similar scenario occurred with thalidomide in the 1960's, which was traced to a prescribed morning sickness pill.

A similar scenario occurred with the recent inflective blood scandal; whereby patients, many of whom were children, were injected with imported blood products from the U.S. contaminated with hepatitis and HIV: which had been taken from high-risk drug users, and sexual minorities.

Secondly, Glyphosate has the quality of being toxic, long after its application at the stem of the city's wild flowers.

Glyphosate poses an additional great threat to human health, as trace elements from even safely deposited Glyphosate, is washed into drains, and then into reservoirs, before re-entering the human drinking system.

This tragic reality is compounded by the fact Oxford is in a valley, which acts as a funnel attracting the "run-off" from the farmer's fields, and Glyphosate deposited in Oxford City.

Farmer report using in excess of five herbicides and pesticide during the growing season.

Trace elements from all those herbicides and pesticide create a cocktail of harmful chemicals as "run off" from the fields; which likewise seep into the drains, and eventually become part of the human drinking water.

This combined cocktail of herbicide and pesticide from field "run-off," together with ODS' year-round spraying of Glyphosate, needs to be given greater attention than air quality concerns.

Once again, I am calling on the Elected Oxford City Council, to place a moratorium on the spraying of Glyphosate within Oxford, by ODS.

Response from Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies

Thank you for your address.

In 2022, as Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services, I commissioned a comprehensive review of the use of glyosphate based weedkillers by Oxford City Council and ODS. ODS carries out the bulk of parks, open spaces and paved surfaces maintenance in the city.

The review looked at the regulatory position, how the weedkiller was used in Oxford and at the cost and effectiveness of alternative weedkiller methods being trialled by other councils in England.

The review found that significant care was taken in the way Glyphosate is used by ODS in Oxford to minimise negative impacts on wider biodiversity. It was being applied by staff wearing PPE on hard paved areas and edges of tennis courts targeting individual

weeds in a precise way – not in a wanton and careless way as the public address alleges.

It also found that all of the alternative weed treatments had a higher cost to apply and none had demonstrated the level of effectiveness of Glyphosate. The use of acetic acid, for instance, created new risks to the insect population and to humans. The study discovered that some local authorities, which had trialled alternatives, had decided to return to using glyphosate based weedkillers, as the best and most effective option to fight weeds in their areas.

The Officer Recommendation, which the Cabinet accepted, was to continue the tightly controlled application of Glyphosate to tackle weed penetration of paved surfaces and invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed. This is in line with current DEFRA and Environment Agency guidance.

It is also interesting to note that the European Parliament rejected the EU Commission's proposal to ban the use of glyphosate based weedkillers in October 2023. So Glyphosate remains approved for use across the EU.

We will keep the use of glyphosate under periodic review as herbicide manufacturers are working to improve the effectiveness of Glyphosate alternatives; and monitor the regulatory environment closely as this could change at a future point.

5. Address from Ashley Smith, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution – Support for Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford City River Action Plan

WASP has been engaging with TW since 2017 up to CEO level.

Our lack of confidence is in the Leadership and owners of Thames Water, not its staff who have to work in a poorly funded environment where 'sweating the assets' is the business strategy.

At the same time as the company is in a financial crisis and demanding more money, leniency in fines and extra dividend values the Chief Finance Officer has just been paid £1.33mn for the 12 months to the end of March, including a £446,000 bonus. The latest CEO Chris Weston, who joined as chief executive in January, took a £195,000 bonus for the three months to the end of March, taking his total pay to £437,000

TW is in its precarious financial state due entirely to mismanagement and inappropriate extraction of funds by shareholders and senior execs over decades.

While engaging with councils over recent years the company claimed not have paid its shareholders dividends for the past 5 years. WASP established through Ofwat that this was a false claim with financial engineering disingenuously reporting these as 'no dividends to external shareholders'.

Ofwat disagreed and as it threatens to penalise Thames Water for wrongly paying out £37.5M, it is revealed that the company paid out £158M in March to keep failing subsidiary companies afloat.

In respect of delivery of promises, it failed to carry out around 108 fully funded remedial projects in the current spending period due to decisions taken at the top of the organisation.

It has allowed Sewage Works like Witney, Oxford and many more to fall way behind capacity and to frequently operate illegally despite knowing the reasons and solutions for these failures. Oxfordshire is littered with highly polluting illegally operating sewage works which get worse with every additional house added to them

The outstanding example is Oxford Sewage Works and the Environment Agency's landmark objection to planning on the grounds of lack of sewage treatment capacity – This followed similar capacity challenges by WODC and WASP for West Oxfordshire sewage works.

The degrading of the sewerage infrastructure has now created a block to sustainable housing giving planners the choice to create additional criminal pollution events and increase risk to public health, damage to biodiversity and the environment or to block needed housing.

The planning authorities will fear appeals from developers but have yet to learn the consequences of creating more illegal pollution and the liabilities in respect of public health risks which the recent Royal Academy of Engineering Report spell out with recommendations to 'rehabilitate' sewage works.

On 20 May WASP wrote to the Thames water CEO to call on him to show leadership and stop the company misleading planners and developers over capacity – he shirked his responsibility. We are sending a complaint to Ofwat about what we say is Mr Weston's dereliction of duty.

We have no confidence in the honesty and integrity of the Leadership of Thames Water and no confidence that it will deliver its statutory duties under the Water Industry Act 1991 – to provide water and waste water services. In many areas, it stopped doing that long ago.

Written Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

Council considered the points raised by Ashley Smith, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution, in relation to a motion of no confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford city river action plan. Following a debate, an amended motion was carried by Council:

<https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/g7807/Printed%20minutes%20Monday%2015-Jul-2024%2017.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

6. Address from Dan Glazebrook, Friends of Grandpont Nature Park – Oxpens River Bridge Scheme

Councillors, thank you for the opportunity to address you on our concerns with the Oxpens River Bridge scheme. Our petition opposing the bridge has now reached over 1500 signatures.

We believe the granting of planning permission for the project to be unlawful, and are confident that the judicial review we are bringing will prove this. You have all been emailed the documents outlining our case in detail but some of the reasons include:

1. The failure to conduct the legally required Environmental Impact Assessment due to the mischaracterisation of the bridge as a standalone development.
2. The failure to recognise and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the woodland scheduled for destruction in the Nature Park, the only section of woodland on the main path through the Nature Park, and the urbanisation of this part of the Nature Park that will come about as a result of the destruction of the current footpath and its replacement by a 4.5m cycle highway, both of which are in breach of NPPF 15.

3. The failure to conduct a lifelong carbon assessment of the bridge, as required by local plan policy RE1
4. The failure to consult with a single residents group in Grandpont, not even the residents association of the Pegasus Grange retirement home, many of whom are dependent on the Nature Park as the only piece of countryside they can access, in breach of the public sector duty under the Equality Act due to the disproportionate impact on the elderly.
5. The Impossibility of a safe route to the bridge due to adjacent flooding on the site (under the existing railway bridge near the scheme - see image 1 in your pack).
6. We believe the use of money from the Housing and Growth Deal for the bridge to be an abuse of this fund, for two reasons:
 - a. "The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, in its own words, is supposed to "ensure that people can live in affordable homes." The specific part of the Growth Deal being used for the Oxpens River bridge is a pot designated for "infrastructure to unlock key housing sites."
 - Yet, the infrastructure the bridge will supposedly unlock is not a key housing site, but a new Oxford University Science and Business Park proposed for Osney Mead, with a tiny housing allocation of just 247 homes according to the local plan. The 4000 workers expected to be brought into this development will exacerbate pressure on the Oxford housing market, not relieve it, and the net effect will therefore be to make housing in the city less, not more, affordable.
 - b. Secondly, the Council's own planning officers stated repeatedly at the planning review committee on April 18th that the bridge is *not* required by the Osney Mead development in any case. If this is the case, it cannot also be argued that the bridge is needed to 'unlock' the Osney Mead development.
7. Council planning officers' made a number of untrue statements to the planning committee:
 - a. The officers report claimed that Grandpont Nature Park is an 'Area of Change' in the local plan, when their own policies map clearly shows it is not. This had the effect of convincing Councillors that the plan had a democratic mandate it did not actually have.
 - b. The officers' report claimed that a new bridge in this location was mandated by the local plan. In fact, nowhere in the local plan is there any reference to a new bridge being needed between Grandpont Nature Park and Oxpens Meadow, the two sites that will be linked by the Oxpens River Bridge (for the obvious reason that such a bridge already exists). Rather, the local plan sets out that there should be a new connection between Osney Mead and the forthcoming Oxpens development. The Oxpens River Bridge, however, would not connect Osney and Oxpens - both of which are commercial developments on private land - but would instead use publicly-owned green space *adjacent* to each of those sites for the bridge.
 - c. In the planning review committee, Councillors were wrongly informed that improving the gasworks bridge would not be any cheaper than building the Oxpens River Bridge, and were misinformed as to the conclusions of the viability study that was conducted on improving the gasworks bridge.
 - d. Planning officers wrongly informed committee members that they were not allowed to meet with local residents opposed to the bridge as this would supposedly constitute 'lobbying.'

- e. Council officers claimed they did not need a Forestry Commission licence to clear fell the area without planning permission, when in fact they did - you have the details in your pack

More examples are in the documentation you have been emailed.

To continue to back this project in the face of all this would risk serious reputational damage to the City Council and we urge you to withdraw your support.

Response from Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning

Both the Oxford City Planning Committee and the Planning Review Committee resolved to grant planning permission following consideration of all the evidence, having regard to all representations received and after considering all material planning considerations. The planning permission has now been issued and it would be inappropriate to comment further given the intimation that legal proceedings will be brought against the Council. However, I understand the Leader has something to add.

Response from Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnership Working

We issued a statement today about the Oxpens River Bridge trying to put into record some of the facts around the bridges and why we believe it to be important. This is available in the Council website.

The bridge will improve the choice of routes for people accessing the area now and in the future. It will deliver a net biodiversity gain in bringing the scheme forward. Officers have followed the proper planning process in making a planning application for the bridge which Cllr Upton has just acknowledged.

Options for the bridge's location were explored before the proposed location was put forward as best location. Importantly, the Oxfordshire Growth Deal funds being used to deliver the bridge is an appropriate use of this grant. It is mainly funded by the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

The proposals have been designed to ensure that the bridge will increase access during the floods, not worsen it.