

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 24 March 2026 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 3.50 pm

Present:

Councillor Mark Lygo – in the Chair

Councillors:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Fenton (Vice-Chair) | Andrew Gant | Gavin McLauchlan |
| Thomas Ashby | Emma Garnett | Lesley McLean |
| Brad Baines | Sean Gaul | Ian Middleton |
| James Barlow | Stefan Gawrysiak | Toyah Overton |
| Ron Batstone | Laura Gordon | Glynis Phillips |
| Tim Bearder | Andy Graham | James Plumb |
| Will Boucher-Giles | Tom Greenaway | Susanna Pressel |
| Chris Brant | Kate Gregory | Leigh Rawlins |
| Liz Brighthouse OBE | Jane Hanna OBE | Judy Roberts |
| Mark Cherry | Jenny Hannaby | James Robertshaw |
| Andrew Coles | David Henwood | Paul-Austin Sargent |
| Nicholas Michael Cotter | Ben Higgins | Geoff Saul |
| Andrew Crichton | David Hingley | John Shiri |
| Hao Du | Johnny Hope-Smith | Roz Smith |
| Imade Edosomwan | Robin Jones | Ian Snowdon |
| Gareth Epps | Emily Kerr | Peter Stevens |
| Lee Evans | Liz Leffman | Bethia Thomas |
| Neil Fawcett | Dan Levy | Liam Walker |
| Nick Field-Johnson | Diana Lugova | Matt Webb |
| Maggie Filipova-Rivers | Saj Malik | Tony Worgan |
| Rebekah Fletcher | Kieron Mallon | |
| James Fry | Emma Markham | |

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

9/26 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The Chair welcomed Members and stated that Item 11 would be considered before Item 10.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 be approved and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

10/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Councillors Creed, Edwards and Heritage.

11/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

12/26 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair noted that on 11 March, Oxfordshire County Council recognised outstanding members of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service through the annual Fire and Community Safety Service Awards. He extended congratulations to all those awarded medals for their service.

The Chair was honoured to attend annual community Ramadan Iftar events at Mansfield College, Blenheim Palace, and the Oxford Academy. At the Oxford Academy, he spoke to a diverse audience on their chosen theme, 'Building Community Trust'. He thanked the Dialogue Society for hosting these events.

The Chair reminded Members of The Chair's Birthday Charity Quiz, to be held on Friday, 17 April at OXSRAD Sports Centre, Court Place Farm, Oxford OX3 0NQ, raising funds for the Chair's chosen charities, OXSRAD, Abingdon RDA, and Oxford United in the Community. Tickets are priced at £20 per person – which includes a welcome drink, cheese and biscuits platter.

The Chair also congratulated and expressed sincere thanks to County Hall Facilities Manager Tim Stimpson MBE on his 32 years of service to the Council including his valuable support for Chairs' fundraising events down the years. The Chair wished Tim Stimpson well for his retirement.

13/26 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED:

That on Oxfordshire County Council Joint Consultative Committee for Uniformed Members of the Fire Service - Councillor Fawcett replaces Councillor Hannaby.

14/26 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Thame and Haddenham Greenway

Sarah Green presented a petition calling for a greenway to link the communities of Thame and Haddenham. Currently the only safe option was for people to use their cars. The petition gained nearly 4000 signatures, with around 1000 from Oxfordshire alone. The route crosses local authorities and there were colleagues campaigning on the same issue with Buckinghamshire Council.

Councillor Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, responded that the Council was continuing to work in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council to investigate an active travel link connecting Haddenham and Thame. Both authorities have committed funding and resources towards the development of the scheme and are working towards conducting public engagement in 2026. The petition will be referred to the Director of Economy and Place for follow up.

Broughton Road, Banbury

Wendy Wilkinson presented a petition requesting speed restrictions and a safe pedestrian crossing on the north end of Broughton Road. Council was informed that Wendy Wilkinson had been hit by a car and sustained a broken neck and ankle. The petition was signed by 70 residents of Broughton Road. It was felt that residents in the estates off that road would support the request.

Councillor Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, responded that whilst funding was available through the Vision Zero road safety programme, the financial allocation for the forthcoming financial year 2026-27 had already been allocated to other projects. However, Councillor Gant advised, that the Council will consider measures for Broughton Road, including a pedestrian crossing, for inclusion in a future programme and also as part of the planned monitoring of the 20 mile an hour programme. The petition will be referred to the Director of Environment and Highways for follow-up.

Roundham Crossing, Kidlington

Lisa Smith presented a petition to save Roundham Crossing in Kidlington from the closure requested in the developer's agreement for the PR8 site at Begbrook Science Park. It was stated that the crossing provides a vital link for residents in Kidlington, with access to green space and connection to important local routes, including the Oxford Canal towpath, the Begbrook Bridleway, and the new footpath and cycleway. The petition, with 638 signatures, called on Oxfordshire County Council, as a statutory consultee on transport, to oppose the closure of the crossing.

Councillor Roberts, Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, confirmed that East-West connectivity in the Kidlington area was a key consideration in the County Council's place planning. At the same time, safety concerns were likely to lead to the crossing itself being closed to achieve the objective of more frequent train services across the Oxfordshire network. Councillor Roberts added that Oxfordshire County Council will look

at what is feasible to mitigate a closure and work with local Councillors, the community, Network Rail and other stakeholders in an attempt to identify a solution. This petition will be referred to the Director of Economy and Place for follow-up.

Travel pass limit

Nathan Stanton presented a petition requesting the removal of the 9am limit on free travel for pass holders with learning and other disabilities. Nathan Stanton advised that people should not have to rearrange key job or health appointments or travel to their day centres to avoid travelling before 9am. The government's own inclusive transport strategy states that disabled people should have the same access to opportunities as everyone else. Oxfordshire should be leading the way in making that a reality. The petition had 200 signatures, with around 100 from Oxfordshire postcodes.

Councillor Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, responded that the County Council currently spends £10.5 million supporting the concessionary travel scheme per year. An extension to the time period of concessionary travel would result in an increase in the level of reimbursement paid to bus operators. This would lead to costs in excess of the current budget for the scheme. The matter will be referred to the Director of Environment and Highways to consider the potential policy and budgetary impact of such a change should such funding become available from central government or another suitable source.

15/26 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 7)

Ten questions were submitted. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

16/26 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

Sixty seven questions were asked. The questions, responses and supplementary questions are recorded in an Annex below.

17/26 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the Cabinet report covering the 9 December 2025, 16 December 2025, 27 January 2026 and 24 February 2026 Cabinet meetings.

On item 1 (Devolution), Councillor Baines asked what steps the Council was taking with authorities across the proposed geography to ensure the earliest possible development of a spatial development strategy and the establishment of a foundation strategic authority. Councillor Leffman responded that there was a consultation underway on the development of a spatial development strategy and that a letter of interest had been sent to government on a proposed foundation strategic authority last week.

Councillor Epps asked why the government decided to include Swindon in the proposed area for a foundation strategic authority. Councillor Leffman stated that discussions had taken place across the proposed area and highlighted that it was for the government to finalise geographical arrangements. Councillor Epps also highlighted that Swindon was in different policing and health authorities.

Councillor Smith asked for reassurance that engagement with parishes and neighbourhood meetings would continue during devolution for Oxfordshire. Councillor Leffman gave that reassurance and noted the engagement with Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils through local government reorganisation.

Councillor Gordon asked about the recent government announcement for a Greater Oxford Development Corporation (GODC) and how that would fit in with ongoing devolution in Oxfordshire, which would highlight that the One Oxfordshire proposal would be the best way forward. Councillor Leffman concurred with those points and stated that the proposed GODC should incorporate a wider area to include some of Oxfordshire's science and business parks.

Councillor Middleton asked if Councillor Leffman agreed with the need for clarity from government regarding the recent announcement on a GODC. Councillor Leffman agreed that clarity would be welcomed and that the government's approach to the GODC needed to include the whole of Oxfordshire and not just Greater Oxford.

Councillor Barlow asked why the Council did not use devolution to reframe the relationship between climate change and economic growth. Councillor Leffman stated that it was clear that growth needed to be sustainable, with efficient transport networks to link up the Thames Valley whilst being mindful of climate change.

Councillor Walker noted that devolution has been discussed at previous Council meetings and asked why local government reorganisation proposals were not afforded the same opportunity. Councillor Leffman stated that there had been plenty of opportunities to discuss LGR through All-Member Briefings and at Place Overview and Scrutiny meetings, noting there were different views across the chamber but that ultimately the final decision was for the government.

On item 2 (HR & Cultural Change – Quarterly Employee Data Report – Quarter 3 2025/26), Councillor Phillips noted the shortfall in expected savings from organisational redesign and asked for information to be included in future reports. The Deputy Leader was happy to look at where that would be possible and highlighted that organisational staff changes needed to be managed carefully.

On item 3 (Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025-2035), Councillor Edosomwan asked what measures would be taken within the plan to ensure

that communication was accessible for people with learning disabilities. Councillor Bearder agreed this was important, and referenced steps taken to deliver accessible communication such as making communications available in both printed and digital form.

Councillor Hanna asked whether the Cabinet Member agreed that this plan (Item 3, Oxfordshire Learning Disability Plan 2025-2035) needed to be a living document and that it should return to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for progress updates in 2027. Councillor Bearder agreed and noted that adult social care would welcome working with scrutiny and other partners to ensure it remained a living document.

On item 4 (My Life My Choice Councillor Deal), Councillor Edosomwan noted the pledge referencing councillors signing the deal to show support and asked why this had not happened to date. Councillor Bearder explained that this might have been an oversight and encouraged all members to read the document.

Councillor Hanna asked if NHS commitment and integration were necessary to ensure success locally in tackling inequalities faced by people with learning disabilities and whether the Cabinet Member shared concerns about the lack of transparency regarding cuts within the Integrated Care Board. Councillor Bearder noted that Oxfordshire had one of the largest pooled budgets with the NHS across the country and confirmed that he'd like to see the My Life My Choice commitment made across the NHS.

Councillor Jones asked about the challenges faced in co-production of this work, given the importance of supporting people with learning disabilities. Councillor Bearder confirmed that the My Life My Choice deal and Learning Disability Plan were aligned.

On item 5 (Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024/25 and Section 106 Improvement Programme Update), Councillor Fry asked for an indication of how the recent government announcement of releasing funds to fix Kennington Rail Bridge, could lead to section 106 funding becoming available for other projects in the area. Councillor Roberts responded that it wasn't clear if the money would go into the section 106 pot directly and highlighted that the overall project overall could take 5 years.

Councillor Pressel asked what the Council was going to do to address the build-up of section 106 funds it held as the spending backlog was increasing. Councillor Roberts highlighted that spending had increased in the last reporting period in comparison with the previous reporting period, as well as the acceleration programme and funding put in place to quicken section 106 spending.

Councillor Baines asked for an updated timeline on when section 106 contributions would be spent over the medium term, what new receipt of monies were expected and if there would be a net reduction in the balance of money held. Councillor Roberts stated that whilst the information could be

found in the reports produced annually officers would be requested to provide some information in response to this question.

Councillor Worgan asked whether future funding would be made available for the Didcot Northern Perimeter Road phase 3 (NPR3) scheme, as housing growth made this a critical piece of infrastructure that was needed. Councillor Roberts agreed that it was not an ideal situation and that the Council had committed to building its section, with negotiations continuing with the developers about other parts of the scheme.

Councillor Epps asked the Cabinet Member to thank officers for using the accelerator programme scheme to progress the Heyford Park mitigation measures. Councillor Roberts undertook to pass on thanks to officers.

Councillor Snowdon asked how a significant slow-down in housing would impact the delivery of the Didcot NPR3 scheme. Councillor Roberts noted that the sticking point was the precise number of homes being built and whether 500 was the correct number.

On item 6 (Updates to 'Implementing Decide & Provide'), Councillor Baines asked about the anticipated cumulative impact on these updates to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) targets for net reductions in car journeys, and how the views expressed by the highways authority are considered in the implementation of this framework at district-level planning authorities. Councillor Roberts stated that more information was available on the website relating to the government's 'Decide & Provide' policy and that clarification would be provided in a written response.

Councillor Kerr asked how the Council's road-building initiatives, such as HIF1 and Watlington Relief Road adhere to the 'Decide & Provide' framework and asked if the models for traffic impacts were the same as in the LTCP framework. Councillor Roberts believed that the documents were available through HIF1 Planning Inspectorate's reports and that it would have been in the documentation considered by the Secretary of State when deciding to approve the application.

On item 7 (Movement and Place Plans – Science Vale), Councillor Fry noted that the Movement and Place Plans passed by Cabinet, referred to 2011 Census data, rather than 2021 data, and asked whether the reduction in car use had been achieved over that decade. Councillor Roberts noted that the problem with the 2021 Census was that it took place during the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult to use. The consensus moving forward was that other sources should be used alongside census data.

Councillor Kerr noted that the majority of schemes within the plan were road-widening and asked how that adhered to the 'Decide & Provide' framework discussed previously, and asked what funding was in place for solely cycling and walking schemes. Councillor Roberts noted that the accelerator section 106 programme allocated funding for cycling and walking schemes. Councillor Roberts referenced the council's Local Cycling and Walking

Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) programme, which identified identifying suitable schemes so that when funds became available, plans were already in place.

Councillor Jones asked for the felling of trees on the HIF1 route be stopped until the impacts of losing trees was assessed, given that the move to environmental impact standards will require the Council to do so in the future regardless. Councillor Roberts committed to provide a written response.

On item 8 (LTCP Monitoring Report 2024-2025), Councillor Fry asked if the ambitious targets within the LTCP would be revised in light of experience. Councillor Roberts stated that the overall project, in terms of how data was presented and handled, would be revised as there were new government standards that the Council needed to take into consideration, as well the need to adjust the population figures.

Councillor Pressel asked how the Council was going to speed up the move to active travel as it was currently failing to achieve a meaningful modal shift. Councillor Roberts confirmed that active travel was towards the top of the Council's agenda, citing the recent upgrade in the Council's active travel ranking, notwithstanding funding constraints.

Councillor Baines asked if there were targets for residents to be within walking distances of bus routes and if the LTCP had modal shift targets for increased bus use. Councillor Roberts stated that 2 buses per hour would be built into parking standards and that the Council was assessing walking distances to various facilities.

Councillor Middleton asked about the east-west cycle path on Bicester Road outlined in the Kidlington LCWIP and whether funding would become available for an important piece of active travel infrastructure. Councillor Roberts noted the importance of LCWIPs in providing plans for areas but stated that the proposal was unfunded and therefore reliant on other sources of funding becoming available before the scheme could be delivered.

Councillor Kerr asked for an update on the progress towards parking targets within the LTCP since 2019. Councillor Roberts undertook to take that forward in the redesign of the report.

On item 10 (Capital Programme Update and Monitoring Report), Councillor Coles welcomed the long overdue enhancements in Witney through Shores Green and Witney Library but asked about the delays to the Witney High Street enhancement schemes. Councillor Levy noted the delays and confirmed that it was scheduled for decision later on in the week, which, if approved, would deliver improvements to the High Street.

Councillor Baines asked what steps were being taken to strengthen financial and project management of key schemes to avoid financial and reputational risks to the Council. Councillor Levy stated the Council had improved the

management of big projects and noted that a period of high inflation meant it was imperative for the Council to undertake work as quickly as possible.

Councillor Hanna asked how section 106 funds were being used to drive forward the Council's capital programme. Councillor Levy noted that section 106 agreements were almost always tied to specific projects but noted the Council was improving its flexibility to be able to spend money more quickly and using various sources of money to fund projects, such as the Milton Heights Bridge scheme approved by Cabinet last week.

Councillor Pressel asked about the delay in relation to the progress of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme and stated that the Council needed to impress a sense of urgency as it was vital for residents of Oxford. Councillor Levy stated that officers were working on this project and that the Council did have a sense of urgency. Councillor Levy undertook to provide a written response outlining the current position.

18/26 OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT (CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT)
(Agenda Item 11)

The Chair took Item 11 ahead of Item 10.

Council considered the report which summarised the comprehensive review of the Code that was undertaken by the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, taking into consideration best practice, and benchmarking against other authorities. Council was asked to approve the revised code.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Smith, Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee and seconded by Councillor Shiri, Deputy Chair. Following discussion, the recommendation was approved unanimously with 62 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

RESOLVED:

that the Constitution be amended at Part 9.6 Officers' Code of Conduct with the text in the Annex.

19/26 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH
(Agenda Item 10)

The Chair accepted two requests to speak on this item before Members considered it.

Laura Price, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action (OCVA), addressed Council on the importance of the Director of Public Health Annual Report and the progress made since the 2019/20 "Some Are More Equal Than Others" report. Laura Price reflected on how COVID-19 exposed deep inequalities in Oxfordshire but also demonstrated the strength of community action when statutory partners and the voluntary sector work flexibly, share power and build trust.

The success of initiatives such as the Connected Communities Fund, Community Capacity Grants and Well Together, were highlighted, which have enabled grassroots groups not only to deliver services but to shape local solutions based on lived experience. Council was warned that the voluntary and community sector faced increasing financial pressure, rising demand and limited resilience, coinciding with the uncertainties of local government reorganisation.

Professor Sir Michael Marmot addressed Council via a recorded contribution, expressing strong support for Oxfordshire's work on health equity. Oxfordshire's unique position among Marmot Communities was highlighted, given it combined areas of significant affluence and academic excellence with deep pockets of rural poverty. The County's progress since the earlier public health report was praised, which had identified these inequalities and stated that this progress contributed to his "evidence-based hope."

Sir Michael stressed that significant challenges remained, particularly around rural deprivation, but noted that Oxfordshire's work had national and international relevance. Sir Michael felt the County's Marmot advisory board meetings was exceptionally strong while also firmly rooted in action. Sir Michael concluded by reaffirming his commitment to supporting Oxfordshire as a Marmot County and emphasised that the work being undertaken locally had the potential to improve outcomes for Oxfordshire residents while serving as a guiding example to other regions.

Council had before it the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2025/26 which offered a comprehensive and accessible review of Oxfordshire's progress in addressing health inequalities since the 2019/20 report, *Some Are More Equal Than Others*.

The report was presented by Councillor Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, who also moved the recommendations. Councillor Leffman, Leader of the Council, seconded the recommendations.

Following discussion, the recommendations were approved with 58 votes in favour, no votes against and seven abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the 2025/26 Director of Public Health Annual Report be noted and specifically the progress made to address health inequalities in Oxfordshire following the publication of the Director of Public Health Annual Report in 2019/2020, which marked a pivotal moment in Oxfordshire.
- b) That the interactive format of the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2025/26 be supported and the insights that can be used for informing future service delivery plans, be noted.

20/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TOM GREENAWAY

(Agenda Item 12)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Greenaway and seconded by Councillor Epps.

“Pride in the appearance of the public realm is important to our residents. Clean and well-maintained pavements make people feel good about their neighbourhood, reduce accidents, and prevent more costly problems later. Neglect leads to uneven footways, hazards for those with mobility difficulties, and higher long-term repair bills.

Routine weed clearance on county pavements was part of highways maintenance until 2007/08, when budget cuts removed the programme. Some parishes now commission their own weed spraying and may be using glyphosate, increasingly opposed by residents because of its risks to health, pets, rivers, and biodiversity. Other parishes are now beginning to trial alternative approaches.

Council resolves to:

1. Note the historic withdrawal of routine weed clearance and the resulting concerns about accessibility, safety, and neighbourhood appearance.
2. Recognise the Council’s statutory duty to keep pavements free of hazards, and that neglect increases both risks and costs.
3. Request Cabinet to seek an officer report with options for re-establishing pavement weed clearance and scheduled maintenance, including alternatives to glyphosate, and how the Council can support towns and parishes to reduce reliance on chemical spraying.
4. Request that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation give due consideration to the findings of this report as part of the next round of budget setting.”

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken. The motion was carried with 64 votes in favour, no abstentions and none against.

21/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS

(Agenda Item 13)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Phillips and seconded by Councillor Barlow.

“Oxfordshire is an expensive place to live and work. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) staff need and deserve the Oxford Living Wage (OLW).

Paying the OLW helps tackle in-work poverty, improves staff wellbeing and retention, and supports local economic resilience. Extending to all suppliers, service-providers and contractors, via inclusion in all contracts, will multiply the impact.

From April 2026, the Oxford Living Wage, a voluntary rate set at 95% of the London Living Wage, will be £14.06 an hour. It recognises the high cost of living in Oxford, costs that OCC workers must meet.

This Council aims for a healthier, fairer and greener county, one that delivers real social value: Paying all staff a living wage is fundamental.

In 2025-6 OCC's lowest paid staff earned £980 less than if an Oxford Living Wage was in place.

OCC could also implement an Oxfordshire Living Wage, reflecting the real cost of living in Oxfordshire.

This Council therefore commits to an Oxfordshire Living Wage and asks Cabinet to

- Include sufficient capacity in the 2027/2028 budget to meet the cost of implementing the Oxford Living Wage for all staff
- Ensure all new contracts negotiated after such decision has been made require contractors, suppliers and service providers to pay the Oxford Living Wage and existing providers as contracts get renewed
- Seek to work with Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire District Councils to explore expanding the Oxford Living Wage to be an Oxfordshire Living Wage
- Publicly promote OCC's commitment to the Oxfordshire Living Wage"

Following discussion, Councillor Evans proposed that the question be now put and this was seconded by Councillor Walker. The Chair agreed that the item had been sufficiently discussed and put the proposal to move to the vote meaning there would be no further debate.

The vote was lost with 20 votes in favour, 24 votes against and 5 abstentions.

Following further discussion, the question was put. Councillor Worgan stood to request a roll call vote and at least seven other Members stood to support the request.

The motion was carried.

The result of the roll call vote was as follows:

Councillors voting in favour (47): Baines, Barlow, Batstone, Bearder, Brant, Brighthouse, Cherry, Coles, Cotter, Crichton, Edosomwan, Epps, Fawcett, Filipova-Rivers, Fletcher, Fry, Gant, Garnett, Gaul, Graham, Greenaway,

Gregory, Hanna, Hannaby, Higgins, Hingley, Hope-Smith, Jones, Leffman, Levy, Lugova, Lygo, Markham, McLauchlan, McLean, Middleton, Overton, Phillips, Pressel, Rawlins, Roberts, Saul, Smith, Stevens, Thomas, Webb, Worgan.

Councillors voting against (0)

Councillors abstaining (13): Ashby, Du, Evans, Fenton, Field-Johnson, Henwood, Malik, Mallon, Plumb, Robertshaw, Sargent, Snowdon, Walker.

22/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LEE EVANS

(Agenda Item 14)

The motion was proposed by Councillor Evans and seconded by Councillor Walker.

“For eleven consecutive years, under varying political leaderships, Oxfordshire County Council was named the top performing county council waste disposal authority.

- The 2025 Satisfaction Ratings of Services survey showed 72% of residents were satisfied with the way Household Waste Recycling Centres operated, with only 16% dissatisfied.
- The hard-work of employees who operate our centres, alongside the conscientiousness of Oxfordshire residents, made the operation of centres a success story in our county.

In spite of this positive record, this Council administration has implemented a series of changes, including a mandatory booking system and the need to bring proof of address with you when using a centre.

This Council acknowledges that:

- The new rules for using waste and recycling centres place additional bureaucratic burdens on residents, making it harder for them to use local centres.
- The implementation of these rules, we believe, has reduced the number of visits to the centres, with more waste likely to be redirected into District & City Council waste collections or, in some cases, fly-tipped.
- These rules are, therefore, a threat to the high rates of recycling previously seen in our County and risk undermining public satisfaction with waste and recycling services.

Therefore, this Council resolves to request the Cabinet to reconsider the issue of rules for using the household waste and recycling centres; revoke these new and unnecessary burdens on local residents; and return to the popular and successful model previously operated.”

The Chair advised that he would hear one speaker from each party on this motion.

Following discussion, an electronic vote was taken and the motion was lost with 23 votes in favour, 33 against and 4 abstentions.

23/26 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES BARLOW
(Agenda Item 15)

The time being 3.50 pm, the motion was not considered in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

Questions from Members of the Public

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received.

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| <p>1. SANDI ADAMS</p> <p>Can you confirm whether Oxfordshire County Council has given any consideration to the development of an urban cable car system in Oxford, either as a standalone proposal or as part of wider transport planning?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>We are actively exploring innovative transport solutions, for example the study we are commissioning for mass rapid transport on the A40 corridor.</p> <p>Urban cable cars have been suggested periodically for Oxford over the years.</p> <p>A combination of very high cost, visual impact and the nature of Oxford's travel patterns make it challenging to see how there can be a business case for urban cable cars at this time.</p> <p>Oxfordshire already has a comprehensive road network which provides extensive transport connectivity. However, due to growth in vehicular traffic the county's road network is congested and hostile for active travel in many places. We are therefore working to manage traffic on the existing road network so that buses can run freely and pedestrians and cyclists can travel safely, whilst working with the rail industry and central government to improve the county's railway system.</p> |
| <p>2. PETER WEST</p> <p>Did OCC share the data protection impact assessment for both / either the traffic filters or congestion charge schemes with the Information Commissioners' Office (for approval / review) ahead of the congestion charges going live and, if</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>No. The UK GDPR only requires an organisation to consult the Regulator on a Data Protection Impact assessment (DPIA) if the DPIA identifies a high risk and it is not possible to reduce or mitigate the risk in any way. As the DPIA for the traffic filters and/or congestion charge schemes does not identify a high risk to individuals there was no requirement for Oxfordshire</p> |

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| not, why not? | County Council to consult with the Information Commissioners' Office (ICO) for approval or review ahead of the congestion charges going live. The DPIA for the schemes identified appropriate safeguards and mitigating measures such that no high residual risk remained. Responsibility for completing, assessing and signing off the DPIA rests with the data controller, not the ICO. |
| <p>3. PETER WHITE</p> <p>Give the high number of congestion charge warning letters issued, what plans does OCC have to install new warning signage on the major approach roads to congestion charge sites, especially those approach roads with few, if any, warning signs?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>67,579 warning letters were issued during the first 6 weeks of the scheme. Oxfordshire County Council has no plans to install additional congestion charge warning signage. The current signage strategy is considered sufficient and provides motorists with multiple opportunities to avoid the charging points. A range of signs, including advance warning signs, are already in place to clearly warn of the congestion charge points.</p> |
| <p>4. YOLA DRAGE BRUNELLI</p> <p>How does Oxfordshire County Council intend to mitigate against the adverse economic impacts of the congestion charge which on St. Clements (where I have two businesses) have suffered a fall of 40 % year on year turnover since the congestion charge went in. Until October 2025 we were doing well. Do you even recognise this impact still less have a plan to do anything about it ?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The congestion charge is still a new scheme. We do not yet have data on the scheme's impact on footfall and consumer spending across the city – officers are working to secure this.</p> <p>The broader economic impacts of the scheme will take some time to understand, as these extend well beyond businesses with a “shop front”.</p> <p>The scheme is temporary and is due to be replaced by the traffic filter trial when Botley Road reopens.</p> <p>The St Clements car park can be reached without passing a congestion charging point, from Iffley Road and Cowley Road.</p> |
| <p>5. BERNADETTE EVANS</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> |

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| <p>The council promised to record data on footfall and spend to monitor the impact of the Congestion Charge on Oxford's hundreds of small high street businesses. This was in response to business owners expressing concern that it would harm trade. Data for footfall in November was duly published on the council's website. The figures included many likely inaccuracies such as footfall in Botley Road retail park being up 47% and Summertown being down 35% and raises questions about whether it is reliable. The data was subsequently removed from the website due to the method of collecting it (Huq) being shown to be inaccurate. Since then no monitoring of either footfall or spend has taken place leaving the business owners high and dry.</p> <p>In the run up to Christmas, Cllr Gant said the Congestion Charge was 'good for business' due to footfall having increased (year on year) by 22% in the city centre. This became the council's narrative. The 22% increase figure came from the now withdrawn Huq data. Knowing this, will Cllr Gant now retract this statement?</p> | <p>The county council undertook to publish monthly monitoring data in relation to the temporary congestion charge. A key part of this data set is monitoring footfall and spend. For this, we engaged a new external supplier, which it was hoped could provide the required information. Footfall data for November was extracted directly from the supplier's platform and published in December. Through comparisons with other data sources which became available in January, a number of anomalies were identified which could not be explained. The data was published in good faith and as soon as this became apparent the data was removed. The supplier has identified the issue and is working on correcting it. As soon as the data is available and validated, it will be published.</p> <p>A full public statement has been published on Oxfordshire County Council's website.</p> |
| <p>6. LINDA ELMS</p> <p>In light of the high number of congestion charge warning letters and fines being issued, does Councillor Gant still believe that the congestion charge signage is adequate? There are, for</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council has no plans to install additional congestion charge warning signage. The current signage strategy is considered sufficient and provides motorists with multiple opportunities to avoid the charging points. A range of signs, including advanced signage, is already in</p> |

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| <p>example no warning signs along Cowley Road and Iffley Road in the run up to the St Clement's filter.</p> | <p>place to clearly warn of the congestion charge points and indicate where it applies.</p> |
| <p>7. NICHOLAS HARDIMAN</p> <p>Please can Councillor Gant specify how Oxfordshire County Council is now monitoring the impact of the congestion charge on businesses? Will footfall and Mastercard spend analysis be reissued, or will other metrics be used instead. If so, what system will be employed and, in both cases, how soon will information be available?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The county council undertook to publish monthly monitoring data in relation to the temporary congestion charge. A key part of this data set is monitoring footfall and spend. For this, we engaged a new external supplier, which it was hoped could provide the required information. Footfall data for November was extracted directly from the supplier's platform and published in December. Through comparisons with other data sources which became available in January, a number of anomalies were identified which could not be explained. The data was published in good faith and as soon as this became apparent the data was removed. The supplier has identified the issue and is working on correcting it. As soon as the data is available and validated, it will be published. A full public statement has been published on Oxfordshire County Council's website.</p> |
| <p>8. RICHARD PARNHAM</p> <p>Can OCC explain why there is a significant discrepancy between the numbers of cars captured via conventional traffic monitoring on congestion charge roads, during the time of congestion charge operation, and the number of cars captured by congestion charge monitors on the same roads, on the same days at the same time?</p> <p>Supplementary Question</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>It has since become apparent that the dataset we were receiving was incomplete, with a significant volume of repeated-journey counts missing from the information originally supplied. Videalert are now providing the corrected dataset, and we are awaiting this so that a full and accurate analysis can be carried out</p> <p>Response</p> |

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| <p>Can Councillor Gant explain why the congestion charge cameras can correctly identify my car and deduct permits if I travel through the Marston Ferry philtre during daylight hours, but not so if I travel after dark when the scheme is still operating? Does the Marston Ferry Road congestion charge camera work properly after dark, capturing all cars it should?</p> | <p>The questioner will forgive me if I don't have the answer straight away, but I'll certainly undertake to get it to him.</p> |
| <p>9. GEOFFREY SUTTON</p> <p>In the Oxfordshire BSIP Progress Report July 2025, in the table labelled "Progress Towards Headline Targets" on page 8, bus journey time was assessed to be 14.2 mph in 2019/20, (the base), 14.3 mph in 2024 with a target of increasing the 2019/20 base journey time of 14.2 mph by 10% (to 15.6 mph) by December 2025, meeting the target being a requirement of the Zebra funding as I understand it. Please can Councillor Gant state the bus journey time measured for 2025 and whether the target increase of 10% was achieved or missed by the end of December 2025?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The bus speed figures reported through the BSIP progress report are derived from monitoring data using all operators, routes, days and hours, and therefore reflect an overall network-wide average rather than performance at the times when bus reliability and capacity pressures are greatest. In practice, the performance improvements are being seen specifically during weekday daytime operation (typically 07:00–19:00). We are therefore considering making changes to the BSIP reporting to reflect this.</p> <p>When performance is assessed on this basis, analysis comparing November 2025 with November 2019 shows a speed improvement of approximately 2.1% indicating that bus journey times during core weekday operating hours have improved.</p> <p>It is important to note however, that the Enhanced Partnership commitment linked to government funding focuses on bus productivity, rather than headline average speed. Productivity improvements are delivered through a combination of speed improvements and reduced dwell time. While there is evidence of speed improvement, further operator data would be required to fully quantify changes in dwell time and overall productivity. The extended closure of Botley Road by Network Rail and resultant delay to the Traffic Filters scheme (which was unforeseen at the time the targets were</p> |

| | <p>set) has resulted in the target not being met. We are continuing to invest in bus priority measures and work closely with our operators to further improve bus journey times for passengers in line with our commitments in the Enhanced Partnership.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------|---------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|----|----------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|----------|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|------------|----------|------|------|------|-------|-----|------|---------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|----------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| <p>10. DAVID STARES</p> <p>I would like to know, how many warning letters / congestion charge fines have been issued by reference to each of the congestion charge sites since the charge went live? i.e. x number of warning letters / x number of fines at the Hollow Way filter.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Warnings</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Hythe Bridge Street</th> <th>St Cross Road</th> <th>St Clements</th> <th>Thames Street</th> <th>Marston Ferry Road</th> <th>Hollow Way</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>1976</td> <td>889</td> <td>1802</td> <td>828</td> <td>555</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>9880</td> <td>5060</td> <td>13565</td> <td>18635</td> <td>2102</td> <td>2685</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>1708</td> <td>930</td> <td>2142</td> <td>4211</td> <td>209</td> <td>349</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>PCNs</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Hythe Bridge Street</th> <th>St Cross Road</th> <th>St Clements</th> <th>Thames Street</th> <th>Marston Ferry Road</th> <th>Hollow Way</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>December</td> <td>7435</td> <td>2996</td> <td>2504</td> <td>12280</td> <td>847</td> <td>1516</td> </tr> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>3934</td> <td>3213</td> <td>2235</td> <td>12848</td> <td>1267</td> <td>1590</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>7140</td> <td>2406</td> <td>2300</td> <td>10433</td> <td>1848</td> <td>1520</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Month | Hythe Bridge Street | St Cross Road | St Clements | Thames Street | Marston Ferry Road | Hollow Way | October | 1976 | 889 | 1802 | 828 | 555 | 53 | November | 9880 | 5060 | 13565 | 18635 | 2102 | 2685 | December | 1708 | 930 | 2142 | 4211 | 209 | 349 | Month | Hythe Bridge Street | St Cross Road | St Clements | Thames Street | Marston Ferry Road | Hollow Way | December | 7435 | 2996 | 2504 | 12280 | 847 | 1516 | January | 3934 | 3213 | 2235 | 12848 | 1267 | 1590 | February | 7140 | 2406 | 2300 | 10433 | 1848 | 1520 |
| Month | Hythe Bridge Street | St Cross Road | St Clements | Thames Street | Marston Ferry Road | Hollow Way | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| October | 1976 | 889 | 1802 | 828 | 555 | 53 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| November | 9880 | 5060 | 13565 | 18635 | 2102 | 2685 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| December | 7435 | 2996 | 2504 | 12280 | 847 | 1516 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| January | 3934 | 3213 | 2235 | 12848 | 1267 | 1590 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| February | 7140 | 2406 | 2300 | 10433 | 1848 | 1520 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received.

1. COUNCILLOR TOM GREENAWAY

For several years, missing bollards and broken bollards on the NCN5 route in Abingdon have meant vehicles consistently parking on the pavement of busy pedestrian route. This issue puts our residents and historic buildings at serious risk of harm as the space is incredibly narrow and not built for vehicles, with multiple residents telling me they must swerve to avoid vehicles and one resident telling me that a vehicle has already hit the Grade 1 Listed Abbey Gate.

This has been reported on FixMyStreet by residents for years now, but no action has been taken to fix this. Similarly, I have raised this issue with the highways department multiple times since being elected, but we are no closer to a resolution here. A post I shared online noting this needed to be resolved received 9,300 views and well over 100 messages of support, please can you tell me when these broken and missing bollards will finally be replaced with permanent ones to stop this antisocial parking?

Supplementary

A bollard here was replaced on Monday, pulled out of the ground on Tuesday, and was nowhere to be seen by Wednesday. When will this be properly fixed so that pedestrians in Abingdon

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

Cllr Greenaway has been informed that the bollards will be replaced 'like for like' with removeable bollards not permanent ones as he requested.

We applied to M Group for a quote for a batch of sign works including this job on 19 December 2025, we placed the order for the replacement bollards on 15 January 2026. The latest M Group update shows that the bollards have been ordered from the suppliers and that M Group are awaiting delivery of one bollard, we have a proposed provisional installation date for both bollards of 16 March 2026.

Response

Obviously, I'm very sorry to hear that that has happened. Clearly, that's the action of somebody outside the direct control of this County Council. And that is, on the face of it, potentially criminal damage. We've had similar issues elsewhere and the business of replacing or fixing things that are wantonly damaged by members of the public is a

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| <p>can chill on Sundays?</p> | <p>regrettable part of what an authority like ours has to do. So, I'll certainly make sure that our officers take that seriously and I hope that we can prevail for people to respect the fact that it's there for a good reason and should be left as it is.</p> |
| <p>2. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Cllr Gant, assure me as the local member for Banbury Ruscote that M Group have the maintenance and personnel capacity to be able to fix potholes in roads like Prescott Avenue, Fiennes Road, Edmonds Road, which have seen substantial increases in potholes during the winter months. The Fairway Road is due micro-asphalt resurfacing work in late 2026, but there are numerous pothole defects outstanding before work even starts. In some cases, I have witnessed pothole repairs that only after a few weeks need to be reported and fixed.</p> <p>Given the funding that the Labour government has given Oxfordshire County Council, would the Cabinet Member agree that, given value of money needed for council taxpayers, there is a need for drastic improvements?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>We recognise the frustration and inconvenience that potholes and carriageway defects can cause and fully understand the expectation for timely and effective repairs, particularly on roads such as Prescott Avenue, Fiennes Road, Edmonds Road and Fairway Road.</p> <p>Like many highway authorities across the country, Oxfordshire County Council is currently managing an exceptionally high and unprecedented volume of defects across the network. Prolonged periods of wet and cold weather during January and February have left road surfaces and underlying layers saturated, significantly accelerating deterioration. As a result, defects can form rapidly and, in some cases, previously repaired areas can fail sooner than would normally be expected.</p> <p>This situation is not unique to Oxfordshire. Nationally, councils are facing similar challenges following one of the wettest winters in recent years, compounded by pressures on the availability of specialist crews, materials and suitable weather windows across the UK.</p> <p>In response, we have taken steps to increase our operational capacity. This includes deploying additional repair crews, bringing in further contractor resources, extending working hours and carrying out repairs at weekends where appropriate. Our approach prioritises safety-critical defects first, while also addressing additional potholes encountered on site to maximise the effectiveness of each visit.</p> |

Supplementary

My question really relates to improvements to FixMyStreet. On the fairway in question, there were nine defects, but there were probably 20 reports that were duplicate. And I think officer time going on that could be done by AI. So essentially it does need to see further improvement to the reporting system.

Regarding Fairway Road, we can confirm that micro-asphalt resurfacing is currently programmed for mid to late 2026. In the interim, defects that meet our safety intervention criteria will continue to be repaired as part of routine and reactive maintenance, and we will monitor the condition of the road closely to manage risks until the planned resurfacing can be delivered. Further locations in Banbury locality are already included in our upcoming surface dressing, resurfacing and structural patching programmes for the spring and summer, when longer lasting repairs can be carried out effectively. Details of locations currently scheduled on our schemes map for delivery within the next one to three years can be viewed via the following link:

https://oxfordshire.highway-iams.uk/Live/PBLC_ANON/PIP/?cg=scheme

The additional funding provided by government has enabled us to strengthen our response, and we remain focused on delivering best value for council taxpayers by targeting resources where they are most needed and ensuring repairs are carried out safely and efficiently.

Your continued engagement and the valuable contribution you make through your role as a Super User is appreciated.

Response

Always happy to look at ways of improving FixMyStreet. That's not actually what the question was about, so the answer doesn't deal with that, but very happy to take that away.

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| <p>3. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member urgently investigate the flooding situation at the following roads: Park Road, next to the Mosque, and Boxhead Road West. The County Council’s highway contractors have cleared all the storm drains in the locality; however substantial flooding is still taking place and is causing concern to local residents?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers have confirmed this issue is on the drainage investigation list. Due to the current programme, it is anticipated investigations will take place in April / May.</p> |
| <p>4. COUNCILLOR SAJ MALIK</p> <p>Has the number of people actually using buses on routes *other than Park-and-ride services* increased since the congestion charge implementation?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Data from the main bus operators* indicates good growth in patronage across P&R services and other local bus services, with the latter accounting for the large proportion of patronage growth in 2026. Overall year-on-year patronage growth is approximately 8% since the introduction of the congestion charge. A third of this growth is on P&R services with the remaining two-thirds on non-P&R services, with some impressive growth on corridors serving the city from other areas e.g. Didcot. This is very encouraging given it is still early days of the congestion charge. Whilst other factors are at play, such as increased frequencies implemented as part of the bus service improvements plan, other increases have been made possible as a direct result of the congestion charge e.g. new and improved services as well as free P&R bus. This is all part of a wider strategy to make walking, cycling and bus the natural first choice.</p> <p>*Note: data is provided by the bus operators. Not all operators responded to the request for information</p> |

5. COUNCILLOR LAURA GORDON

To ask the Cabinet Member for Finance: What plans are being made to manage the cuts in funding from central government?

Supplementary

Can you just clarify how the fair funding review and the response and the financial strategy that we set out for it will be affected by the inflationary pressures caused by Donald Trump's illegal war with Iran?

COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND TRANSFORMATION

The impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 was considered as part of the budget agreed by Council on 10 February 2026. Additional on-going savings of £5.4m were built into the final agreed budget for 2026/27 to balance to the available funding. Further savings of at least £15.5m are expected to be required in 2027/28.

The [Financial Strategy](#) for 2026/27 sets out the council's approach and explains that the Delivering the Future Together programme is accelerating the delivery of financial and non - financial benefits and supporting the council's financial sustainability. Where the council is providing services above the statutory minimum or at a level above statistical neighbours, action to reduce spend or increase income will have to be taken to help meet the legal requirement to balance the budget overall. This will need to be considered through the Budget and Business Planning process for 2027/28. The process of preparing the budget for 2027/28 has already commenced, because of the scale of the challenge created by the settlement.

The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in January 2026 explained that £5.5m additional interest on balances is expected to be held in a new Budget Reserve at 31 March 2026 and will be available to support future budget processes on a one – off basis.

Response

So, there's a lot of work going on at the moment, as you would expect, looking for the rest of this year and future years to make sure that we can meet our budget. You are absolutely correct, Councillor Gordon, that inflation is likely to be substantially higher than we'd expected. And inflation typically hits local authorities very hard because of its effect on fuel, construction costs and salaries. It's going to make things harder and of course, it wasn't at all expected.

6. COUNCILLOR GARETH EPPS

At the last full Council, mention was made that the High Needs Deficit for SEND provision would be subject to a 90% rebate. However, it now appears that this rebate will only come with strings attached. Could I ask the Cabinet Member what those strings are, and how they might affect the choices we make?

COUNCILLOR SEAN GAUL, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Many thanks to Cllr Epps for raising what is possibly the most important subject matter of the moment. There has been much discussion on the 90% SEND deficit write off with some residents writing to me asking what we plan to do when we receive our injection of cash and have new breathing space.

There are a few points to underscore, the Secretary of State for Education confirmed in a meeting with Lead Members for Children's Services and Directors of Children's Services that whilst there is a commitment to the 90% write off, any support coming from the Department for Education will be completely conditional on how much or how little they approve of the SEND reform plan that each local authority must now write and submit by May 17th. Each Council has been allocated a financial adviser to work with them to develop this plan, however this is a tight deadline and comes before the end of the SEND reform consultation which closes on the 18th May.

We estimate that our cumulative deficit will be £163 million by March 31st, therefore our write off value is set to be worth £147 million. There is a lot of pressure to get this SEND reform plan right, as we are told it will either secure the full write off, or not. Its important to note this is not an injection of cash which can be spent, this is a write-off of cumulative years of in- year overspends since the last reforms which have been set against Councils budget.

Separate to this, the SoS went onto say that our deficits for the next two years are likely to be subject to similar government support, but again, this is not to be assumed, and any forthcoming support will not be unlimited. It is also the case that whilst the Government are consulting on SEND reforms the legislation hasn't changed and isn't expected to until 2029-2030. An acceptable SEND reform plan is expected to be effective in driving down future deficits before government support is required. If we are successful in securing a government write off, this will not mean that we will have spare funds or new breathing space, we will be left to carry the remaining 10% worth £16 million with no certainty about who is liable for future deficits which will inevitably

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| | run up in the new financial year and the next. |
| <p>7. COUNCILLOR TIM BEARDER</p> <p>Withdrawn</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> |
| <p>8. COUNCILLOR SEAN GAUL</p> <p>Can I firstly record my most sincere thanks for the meaningful and completely professional way in which the Cabinet Member for Transport Management has engaged with me on all my Bicester East discussions, queries, and concerns to date. In following up on one of those discussions that we have had since I arrived to this council, can I press for some detail in response to questions that are being energetically and emphatically put to me by concerned residents and local campaigners who are impatient for safe passage across our busy Launton Road for residents of nearby Glory Farm who rely on being able to access their Lidl, Iceland Food Warehouse and The Range. I and many others have seen countless instances where mums with buggies are struggling to cross with busy traffic ceaselessly flowing from either side and the elderly who catch a break from one side of passing traffic who kindly slow to allow for passage only to have to give up when the traffic on the other side does not reciprocate.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Thank you for raising the desire for a new pedestrian crossing at Launton Road Bicester. Officers have confirmed to me the request for scheme is recognised and is logged on our unfunded schemes programme as it has not been prioritised for the Road Safety and Accessibility funding in 26/27. A review of s106 funding unfortunately hasn't identified a suitable fund. Officers will continue to review the schemes priority for future funding and other funding opportunities as it is appreciated that this crossing that is well supported by the local community.</p> <p>Regretfully funding from your Councillor Priority fund is likely to fall some way short of the funding required and so may be better utilised elsewhere.</p> |

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| <p>Residents are understandably confused on this issue given our local newspaper reported February last year that this matter was resolved (Bicester: Commitment for new pedestrian crossing secured Bicester Advertiser). My question is, is it resolved and if so, when will we see a new safe pedestrian crossing? If it is not resolved, what are the realistic timeframes from inception to completion and can use of my priority funding aid acceleration of this crucial work?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Just on the matter of cost of the Launton Road pedestrian crossing, so I can report back to residents, do we have an idea of how much an estimated cost of a pedestrian crossing would cost, please?</p> | <p>Response</p> <p>I don't, but I'm very happy to supply that. But thank you very much for your continued efforts on this. And it reflects on something we've already said at this meeting that demand for road space just keeps on going up and that has really significant safety issues. And I'd certainly commend Councillor Gordon and everybody else who represents Bicester for their engagement with things like the movement and place plan for Bicester and the LCWIP and our market town strategy to try and find a holistic solution to this, to use road space in our historic market towns in the best possible way.</p> |
| <p>9. COUNCILLOR SEAN GAUL</p> <p>Bicester North is a busy train station which relies on the constant use of the rail bridge above the Buckingham Road. With trains above the bridge constantly, vehicle movements underneath is an almost constant too. In addition to the trains above and vehicles below, pedestrians, cyclists, wheelers, prams, and pushchairs are frequent users of the pavements on either side of the passing vehicular traffic below the bridge, which</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>Thank you for raising these concerns, which officers are already aware of.</p> <p>The gullies in this area were last cleansed in August 2025 as part of the annual gully cleansing regime. At the time of cleansing, all gullies were found to be in working order with no reported defects.</p> <p>We are aware that there may be issues at the outfall, which is located on Network Rail land, and will be pursuing this with Network Rail to understand what works may be</p> |

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| <p>in dry conditions is typically without event. However, when the rain falls and the gullies fill, the highway element of directly beneath the railway bridge on Buckingham Road floods too easily and too quickly. Considerate drivers will want to do their very best not to create tidal splashes as they pass through consequently drenching the active travel community, but it is tough as there is nowhere to go other than directly ahead. As the party who advocates most for the active travel community, can I ask for support from the Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action to help drive through a plan to resolve what could well be a matter of lesser importance considering the size and scale and breadth and depth of work carried out by this county council, unless you are the pedestrian or cyclist or mum with kids or wheelchair user that has started their day getting drenched from head to toe?</p> | <p>required. Any necessary maintenance to the ditch itself is understood to be the responsibility of the landowner.</p> <p>Pending any necessary third-party ditch clearance, further drainage investigations have been included in the forward rolling programme, which will include a CCTV survey of the associated pipework. We anticipate that these works will be undertaken within three months of instruction, however, our expectation is that the works will be scheduled for early April, subject to the requisite permit approvals.</p> |
| <p>10. COUNCILLOR DAVID HENWOOD</p> <p>New road layouts and amendments often involve officers from the Vision Zero team, who encourage pre-application engagement with stakeholders such as CoHSAT, Cyclox, Oxford Liveable Streets, and pedestrian groups. While early engagement is clearly valuable, can the Council explain why equivalent engagement is not routinely extended to motorist groups, disabled people’s organisations, residents, and representatives of school children (with</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The Council encourages applicants to consider the needs of all road users at an early stage, but it is important to be clear about what pre-application engagement is — and is not.</p> <p>Pre-application discussions are confidential, in line with national planning practice. This allows applicants to explore options openly with officers and receive frank advice before proposals are finalised. The Council does not carry out external consultation at this stage, and pre-application material is not public.</p> <p>Crucially, the Council does not engage selectively with particular user groups during</p> |

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| <p>appropriate adult supervision)? How does the Council ensure that all affected road users are equally considered at the pre-application stage?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Why does CoHSAT, Cyclox and Oxford Liveable Streets have access to confidential options combined by officers in relation to the slip road at the bottom of Rose Hill at the junction of Church Kelly Road?</p> | <p>pre-application discussions. We do not consult cyclists' organisations in preference to motorists, or any other group over another. Instead, officers apply adopted policies — including the user hierarchy and the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan — to ensure that the needs of all road users are considered consistently. Because of this confidentiality, the Council cannot consult with motorists' organisations, disability groups, residents, or representatives of school children at pre-application stage — just as it cannot consult with any other external group. Responsibility for any early stakeholder engagement rests with applicants. All groups have full and equal opportunity to comment once a formal planning application is submitted and proposals are public, ensuring transparency and fairness before decisions are taken.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>They don't. Read the answer. The councillor seems to be muddling up a pre-application, which is a confidential process with co-production and engagement.</p> |
| <p>11. COUNCILLOR DAVID HENWOOD</p> <p>Can the Council confirm the total number and value of compensation claims received in the last 12 months relating to pothole damage, how many of those claims were upheld, and what assessment has been made of the underlying causes? What steps are being taken to reduce</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>For the period 1st January to 31st December 2025 the Council received 1926 claims for pothole related damage to vehicles, with a value of £691,688.</p> <p>For claims received in the period 1st January to 31st December 2025, 872 of the claims received within that timeframe were accepted and £229,715 paid out in compensation</p> |

both the number of claims and the associated cost to the taxpayer?

In the period 1st January to 21st February 2026 the Council has received 2118 claims for pothole related damage, with a value of £629.721. We are working through the investigation of these, so currently cannot confirm how many will be accepted or the cost to the Council.

For the period 22nd February 2026 to the 18th March 2026 approx. 870 claims were received. We are unable at this time to provide further information on the value of these claims as the claim value information has not as yet been unloaded within the system.

In response, we have mobilised an unprecedented level of operational resource, with 27 pothole repair crews currently deployed across the county. The use of four Dragon Patchers to deliver targeted remedial works, alongside increased use of specialist plant such as Bobcat to address larger areas of carriageway deterioration. Both county council and contractor teams are operating extended hours, including weekends, to accelerate repairs and respond as quickly as possible. All defects are prioritised based on safety risk, and, where appropriate, temporary repairs may be undertaken to maintain network safety while permanent solutions are programmed. We recently issued a press release outlining these measures, which you may find of interest: [Oxfordshire increasing number of crews repairing potholes following cold snap](#) and are publishing weekly stats on our LinkedIN and other channels - <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/your-place>

To minimise repeat failures and reduce associated claims, the council undertakes post-completion quality inspections on a proportion of completed repairs. Any works identified as substandard are rectified promptly at no additional cost to the authority. Where recurring quality issues are identified, these are addressed through formal contractual performance management, which may include financial adjustments and impacts on contractor Key Performance Indicators. In addition, the council has established a dedicated Defects Process Improvement Team (PIT) to strengthen end-to-end defect management. This programme focuses on improving inspection accuracy, works instruction quality, and data integrity, with the specific aim of reducing

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Could the cabinet holder also follow up with unsettled claims at a later date?</p> | <p>abortive visits, achieving improved “right first time” outcomes and lowering the number of successful Section 58 claims, thereby delivering better value for money for taxpayers.</p> <p>The council’s Insurance and Highways teams work closely together to ensure claims are assessed consistently and robustly, supported by inspection records, repair histories and compliance with policy. Where the council can evidence that it has taken reasonable steps to maintain the highway, this helps to successfully defend claims and protect public funds.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Well, yes, I'm grateful to the Councillor for the question because I'd ask Councillors to read that answer very carefully because it does give a real insight into the scale of the challenge that this Council and its officers and our contractors are facing. Just have a look at those numbers in the entirety of calendar year 2025, 1926 claims. From the 1st of January to 21st of February 2026, 2118 claims.</p> <p>And then to 18th of March, a further 870, making just under 3000. In other words, 50% more in the first 10 weeks of 2026 than in the whole of 2025 that is the scale of the issue that is facing us. The answer does give very clear information about how many of those claims have been through the system and have been settled and that process continues.</p> |
| <p>12. COUNCILLOR DAVID HENWOOD</p> <p>Would the Council consider allowing 24-hour access through the temporary congestion charge locations for fully zero-emission vehicles, in order to strengthen the incentive effect and support residents and businesses who have already invested in compliant vehicles?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The primary purpose of the temporary congestion charge is to reduce congestion while Botley Road is closed to traffic, ahead of the county council’s implementation of the trial traffic filters. Its focus is on improving bus journey times where this is most needed, as well as enhancing conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Although air quality is expected to improve in many parts of the city, this is not the scheme’s main objective. Electric vehicles occupy the same amount of road space as vehicles with internal combustion engines; as a result, they contribute just as much to congestion and road danger.</p> |

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| | <p>The congestion charge, and its eventual successor - the trial traffic filters, applies only to cars. All other vehicle types can pass through the congestion charge points without incurring a charge. Furthermore, a range of permits are available for cars, including those for 'business cars used as goods vehicles' and 'personal cars used as goods vehicles.'</p> |
| <p>13. COUNCILLOR JAMES ROBERTSHAW</p> <p>With the current strategy of Living Well and the unpaid carers strategy, does the service know how many unpaid carers there are in the county, what their needs would be and if the budget funding is available to help those people?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR TIM BEARDER, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS</p> <p>According to Census 2021, there are 52,674 unpaid carers in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Under the Care Act 2014, the Council and NHS have a statutory duty to ensure that needs of unpaid carers are assessed, and support is available for carers.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council has a long-standing partnership with Carers Oxfordshire. The current contract expires on 31 March 2026 and following the approval by a Delegated Decision, we commissioned a renewed unpaid carer support service through a procurement exercise. The new contract will be in place from 1 April 2026. The budget for the new service is £1,071,631 per year plus £625,250 for carer payments, both shared equally between OCC and ICB.</p> <p>Our carer support service is the primary way we meet Oxfordshire's carers' needs based on Carers Surveys, regular feedback we receive, and wider research. We had carried out a comprehensive review of carers needs and priorities in preparation for the Carers Strategy, which was then co-produced with carers. The Strategy's vision and priorities reflect what carers told us matter to them.</p> <p>The support service provides a comprehensive menu of support options for carers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, advice and support- online, over the phone and face-to-face • Carrying out carers' assessments • Peer support, training, befriending services and carers groups • Care Matters - a quarterly newsletter for carers • Administering Carer ID |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>There are 50,000 unpaid home carers in the County, which is massive. My question really is, how can the Council actually ascertain what the needs are and how it can be funded? If you can't answer it now, I'll follow it up with an e-mail.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing short break opportunities for carers. <p>Please see Services Handbook for details</p> <p>The service helps to reduce carer stress and carer breakdown. The service has seen consistent growth in the number of people being supported which demonstrates the high and increasing level of demand by the service. Our Carers Strategy complements and strengthens the support and provides a platform for health, social care and voluntary sector partners join their support offers to have a meaningful and joined up support for our carers.</p> <p>Following a carer assessment, carers can be awarded up to £300 in any 12-month period. We are working with our data team on developing further ways of identifying carers known to the Council who most at risk of carers breakdown are, to help support them better.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>He's right to point out this astonishing number of people who were working with very little pay, doing this on a voluntary basis in most instances, and we do enable to give them as much support as possible, which is outlined in the answer about Carers Oxfordshire. We work in partnership with them to provide information for these individuals and we provide all the support through that.</p> |
| <p>14.COUNCILLOR JAMES ROBERTSHAW</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member also advise on the plans to develop the family support network in the county?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR TIM BEARDER, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS</p> <p>Oxfordshire has a wide range of family support networks, providing information, advice, emotional support, advocacy, and practical help for families, unpaid carers in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>1. Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN) Home - OxFSN</p> |

Oxfordshire Family Support Network is set up and run by families for families of people with learning disabilities across Oxfordshire and surrounding areas. They provide independent, reliable information, advice, and support to families of individuals with learning disabilities across all ages.

Adult Social Care Commissioning Service at Oxfordshire County Council has a contract OxFSN which covers strategic partnership, providing training and information. As part of this, OxFSN played a key role in co-developing Oxfordshire's Learning Disability Strategy for 2025-2035, including hosting the World Café Event in Didcot on 26 November 2024, which was one of the main events to hear views and experiences of families, professionals, and people with learning disabilities. OxFSN also produced guides for families including the Moving-Into-Adulthood Handbook.

2. My Life My Choice [Home - My Life My Choice](#)

We also have a funding agreement with My Life My Choice, a charity run by and for people with learning disabilities in Oxfordshire, which covers self-advocacy groups and Quality Checkers. Self-advocacy groups are spaces where they can have a voice, be listened to, and supported by their peers. It is also a place for them to make friends, be social and share what's important to them, the barriers they are facing and how they would like to improve their lives.

[Cabinet approval of the LD strategy](#)

2. Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum ([OxPCF](#)) is an impartial, independent body led by a dedicated team of volunteers. The team are all parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They are hosted by Oxfordshire Family Support Network.

OxPCF collaborates with the Council's Adults and Children's services to support SEND and carers related initiatives. OxPCF is a member of Carers Strategy Oversight Group, which connects carers and professionals together to

ensure that support is relevant, meaningful, meet carers' needs, and ensures their voices are heard.

3. Oxfordshire County Council Family Information Service (FIS)

- A onestopshop providing information on childcare, activities, local services and family support <https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

4. Carers Oxfordshire (Supports Family Carers of All Ages)

- Provides advice, information, support groups, financial guidance, and carer payments.
- Offers both universal (information & advice) and targeted (assessments, breaks, emotional support) help for families caring for relatives.
- www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk

5. Wider Support available for families

- Dementia Oxfordshire – support for people with dementia and their families.
- Age UK Oxfordshire – services for older people and their families
- Oxfordshire Mind and Rethink Mental Illness – mental health support for families.
- Better Housing Better Health – practical support on home safety and wellbeing.
- Various community groups supporting people and their families to remain independent in their communities.

This is a non-exhaustive list of support networks for families in Oxfordshire that we work closely with, which illustrates how we work with them to provide vital support for families, whether this is enabling easier access to information, emotional support, practical help, advocacy or specialist advice. Our work covers various arrangements including contracts, funding agreements and strategic partnership supporting our ongoing work and strategic planning. We are proud of our partnerships

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| | <p>with networks supporting people and their families and have no plans to develop our own family support network at present.</p> |
| <p>15.COUNCILLOR NICHOLAS FIELD-JOHNSON</p> <p>Many potholes are repaired and then within a few days the repairs fall apart such as in Leafield a pothole was mended and then within days it was back to its original poor state and also drivers have complained about a pothole that has opened up just weeks after it was repaired on Bampton Road near Witney. When will we hold the maintenance company to account for its shoddy workmanship?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers and I fully understand how frustrating it is for residents and road users when a defect reappears shortly after work has been completed. A good number of repairs remain in good condition, however, a percentage can fail prematurely, especially during prolonged periods of wet weather. We are also carrying out a slightly higher number of temporary sweep & fill repairs at the moment which may not last as long as the sawn cut repairs. This may be done if a more complex permanent repair is needed to be planned.</p> <p>To minimise repeat failures and reduce associated claims, the Council undertakes post completion quality inspections on a proportion of completed repairs.</p> <p>Any works identified as substandard are rectified promptly at no additional cost to the authority, though the frustration and disruption to the public this causes is recognised.</p> <p>Where recurring quality issues are identified, these are addressed through formal contractual performance management mechanisms (this can include financial and other penalties).</p> <p>Officers are also using the recent challenges to jointly improve on defect management; including inspection coverage, works instruction quality and data, achieving improved “right first time” outcomes, maximising value of FMS SuperUsers.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>There are, of course, several questions on this and indeed many, many inquiries on a</p> |

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| <p>You mentioned that substandard works are quickly identified and the work is actually then done at no additional cost. But I have several cases in my division where particular work has been done and has not been satisfactory. Fordwells, as an example, was resurfaced and within three days to a week, all of those potholes had popped out, and it still has not been mended. It's very frustrating to see a lot of the work, which bluntly is substandard.</p> | <p>similar subject. And indeed, of course, all Councillors see it themselves, including me. And I absolutely would repeat what it says at the beginning of the answer there. I fully understand how frustrating this is for residents.</p> <p>The answer that I gave to Councillor Henwood a moment ago does put into context the scale of the challenge. The Councillor is right that where these are identified as NCDs, non-chargeable defects, then they are fixed at no extra cost to this council. This council is making the progress that it can. But I do understand the frustrations.</p> |
| <p>16.COUNCILLOR NICHOLAS FIELD-JOHNSON</p> <p>OCC has tried and tested better road repair material. Why is that not being used for pothole repairs rather than the old asphalt which never lasts?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council employs a range of repair materials and techniques, rather than relying solely on traditional asphalt, selecting the most appropriate solution based on site conditions and operational requirements at the time of repair.</p> <p>Our highway depots utilise Hot Rolled Asphalt (HRA), which is delivered daily and stored in heated hotboxes, enabling permanent repairs to be carried out where weather and site conditions are suitable. In addition, we deploy several high-performance cold-lay materials, many of which are widely used by highway authorities nationally.</p> <p>These include products such as Viafix (https://www.viatec-uk.com/), which is moisture-activated and can be installed in wet conditions, and Tough Patch, supplied by UltraCrete (https://www.ultraproducts.co.uk/road-repair/ultracrete-tough-patch/). While these materials can offer strong performance in specific circumstances, they are significantly more expensive and therefore cannot be used as a universal solution across the network.</p> <p>We also undertake repairs using mastic asphalt and operate Dragon Patcher spray-injection technology, both of which are effective for particular defect types and</p> |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Yes, this is a subject I brought up on several times in this chamber, is questioning the materials that are being used. Not only the work, as I mentioned, is substandard, but the actual materials, by and large, are old fashioned. I read today, for instance, Bournemouth are using a new moisture preventing filling. It's a kind of new substance. We have tried various surfaces 18 months ago, but I don't believe that we are still at the point where we are actually using state-of-the-art filling material for our potholes. I take your point that some of these materials are more expensive.</p> <p>So, my question is here, surely we should be actually going down the road of using better</p> | <p>locations. Furthermore, the Council is currently evaluating thermal repair techniques, utilising infra-red heating to rework existing materials. This method is under active consideration and may be introduced subject to final technical and operational approval.</p> <p>There is no single repair material that is suitable in all circumstances. The method selected is informed by factors such as the underlying condition of the carriageway, prevailing weather, traffic loading, and the urgency of making a defect safe. In some cases, an initial temporary repair is necessary to manage immediate risk, with a more durable intervention programmed when conditions permit.</p> <p>Repair performance is continuously monitored, and the Council regularly reviews materials and techniques to ensure repairs are safe, effective, and represent best value for public funding.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Well, it's a balance, isn't it? We don't have a limitless budget. I wish we did. I wish central government funded us properly. Let's be honest, we've had this conversation in this chamber before now. So, I fully acknowledge that this current Labour government has actually stepped up and provided more money. It's still not enough, but it has done and that is very welcome. But it's not enough. I'd love to be able to just stand here and say, yes, absolutely, we will use state-of-the-art, best quality stuff in every single pothole, but the sums just don't allow us to do that.</p> |
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| <p>material, albeit even if they are slightly more expensive.</p> | |
| <p>17.COUNCILLOR NICHOLAS FIELD-JOHNSON</p> <p>Can Cllr Gant confirm how many pothole repairs are currently outstanding in West Oxfordshire and how many were fixed in January and February?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The number of pothole defects outstanding in West Oxfordshire as at 19 March 2026 is 1144.</p> <p>The number of pothole defects fixed in January was 591.</p> <p>The number of pothole defects fixed in February was 641.</p> |
| <p>18. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>A couple of months ago this council put out some highly misleading -- in fact completely false -- figures for footfall in Oxford city centre. Please can you explain how this happened, and give us the correct figures?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The county council undertook to publish monthly monitoring data in relation to the temporary congestion charge. A key part of this data set is monitoring footfall and spend. For this, we engaged a new external supplier, which it was hoped could provide the required information. Footfall data for November was extracted directly from the supplier's platform and published in December. Through comparisons with other data sources which became available in January, a number of anomalies were identified which could not be explained. The data was published in good faith and as soon as this became apparent the data was removed, so as <u>NOT</u> to be misleading. The supplier has identified the issue and is working on correcting it. As soon as the data is available and validated, it will be published.</p> <p>A full public statement has been published on Oxfordshire County Council's website.</p> <p>Response</p> |

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| <p>This is about the data on footfall in the city centre. And I'm glad that my question has at least forced an overdue public disclaimer of the data that was put out by the County Council. But the city council knew already in mid 2025 that the data was wrong. So did county officers know that the data was wrong? Why then did the cabinet insist on publishing wrong data?</p> | <p>Well, I'm looking at the monitoring officer and the suggestion that this council deliberately published wrong data. It's not the case, obviously.</p> <p><u>Monitoring Officer:</u> As far as I'm aware, the Council has not deliberately published wrong data, but I will certainly look at the matter myself personally. But in terms of the data that has been provided, the answer clarifies the position of the Council.</p> |
| <p>19. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>How does our backlog of unspent money from S106 and CIL compare with other local authorities?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>We are proud of our record of securing S106 contributions from developers to pay for the infrastructure that communities need. The process of collecting and spending S106 is complex and often for large projects such as schools, relies on collecting funds from multiple developments over many years. Necessarily therefore we will carry a balance of funding, especially following periods of intense development. However, we are well aware that there are areas where we must accelerate delivery and ensure that future funding is collected in a way that leads to the most effective delivery of infrastructure. Independent surveys published in the trade-press have reported Oxfordshire as holding a high level of S106 funding in reserves when compared with other authorities both in absolute terms and, to a lesser extent, when considering the funds held by the size of the authority. These surveys are based on FOI returns from authorities, with the most recent survey based on a 70% return rate from councils. There is still significant improvement to make but we are showing very positive progress. To address these issues, we have put in place a comprehensive improvement programme most recently reported to the place Scrutiny Committee in November 2025. There are no official national figures published for the level of S106 contributions held.</p> <p>As the upper tier authority, Oxfordshire County does not collect CIL as this is a district function. Where the local scheme permits (currently for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils) we request CIL funding for specific projects against an</p> |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>This is about the backlog of spending on Section 106 money. The answer clearly states that there was a massive survey done of other councils with a 70% return. And so why is my question not being answered? Where does Oxfordshire stand in this list?</p> | <p>agreed budget. This is drawn down into the Capital Programme with delivery reported back to the districts quarterly.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Well, as it details in the answer, not every council answered this. And if you look at the ones that didn't, it's quite interesting to see the ones who didn't reply to the survey versus the ones who did. So I think you're right in the survey. We are the highest amount of money not spent.</p> <p>However, that doesn't mean to say that that's an incorrect position to be, because we actually collect a huge amount of money. So if you look over the years, there has been a very large amount of money collected. And as we all know, it is a complex system, as is detailed in the answer, to be able to get that money out of the door. And we have put money both in last year's budget and in this year's budget to accelerate that and have made many, many other improvements to the system to speed the whole system up over the previous administration's ability.</p> |
| <p>20. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>There is a new life sciences building in my division in Botley Road going up fast. It's called Fabrica. The developers applied to be allowed to have seventy-four car parking spaces, although it is almost opposite the massive Seacourt park and ride car park, a few minutes' walk from Oxford Station and on multiple excellent bus routes, with safe cycle routes leading to its door. I urged our officers to ask for a reduction in the number of car spaces. They did not do so. In view of this, how can we claim to have an active travel policy? And how can we claim that we</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>At the time of the application for the Fabrica development (2022) the relevant Local Plan policy stated that:</p> <p><i>'the parking requirements for all non-residential development, whether expansions of floorspace on existing sites, the redevelopment of existing or cleared sites, or new non-residential development on new sites, will be determined in the light of the submitted Transport Assessment or Travel Plan, which must take into account the objectives of this Plan to promote and achieve a shift towards sustainable modes of travel. The presumption will be that vehicle parking will be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure the successful functioning of the development.</i></p> <p><i>In the case of the redevelopment of an existing or previously cleared site, there should</i></p> |

want to reduce congestion and pollution?

be no net increase in parking on the site from the previous level and the Council will seek a reduction where there is good accessibility to a range of facilities.'

The proposals included 63 staff parking spaces - a provision for 10% of staff - 8 spaces for visitors and 3 disability accessible spaces. This was a reduction of 84 spaces compared to the previous number on the site.

Despite this, highways officers had initially objected to the proposals on the basis that the numbers had not been justified and the need had not been evidenced given the accessible location of the site. Following the submission of further evidence by the applicant, it was accepted by the City Council Planning Authority and highways officers that in this case the provision was the minimum necessary to ensure the successful functioning of the site and that the proposals were in line with the policy outlined above.

It should be noted that three subsequent applications for life sciences buildings on Botley Road have since been approved with no staff parking, in line with LTCP targets.

Supplementary

Yes, this is another case where the answer itself shows up the failure to answer my question properly. This is about how many parking spaces are allowed in a development in Botley Road.

And it says that the officers felt at that time we have 74 parking spaces, but at the end of the answer it says no staff parking was allowed?

Response

I have to admit, I didn't really hear all of that and I don't think there is an anomaly. I think the answer was very clear and actually said exactly the system that was gone through. The basic point of this answer is that this particular planning application went through the city's planning system before any changes that occurred. So, it has been judged against the system. There was pushback, but we have to follow the rules of the system.

21. COUNCILLOR LESLEY MCLEAN

What steps are being taken to ensure that roads forming key bus corridors in Kidlington are prioritised for maintenance and resurfacing? and what the timeline is for making the full route across Kidlington fit for purpose, effective and secure, particularly in areas where road conditions have deteriorated under sustained bus and heavy vehicle use?

Supplementary

I'm in communication with officers in relation to local bus routes, including Begbroke Slip Road, which is now in part impassable, and also the lack of planned preventative maintenance for my division in the forward plan and I would appreciate the cabinet member's support in future discussions in order to bring these matters forward.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

Thank you for raising ongoing concerns regarding the condition of bus routes within your division.

I appreciate the frustration caused by recurring defects, and would like to reassure you that a number of key routes in the area have been treated in recent years as part of our wider maintenance programme. These include Grovelands (much of which was resurfaced last year), sections of Lyne Road, the Langford Road / Banbury Road junction, and Cassington Road. These schemes were delivered to address structural issues and improve overall resilience of the carriageway.

In addition to completed works, further treatments are planned. Sections of Lyne Road are programmed to receive targeted repairs using the Bobcat patching method, which is effective at addressing localised defects and extending the life of the road. Looking ahead, the A44 is also included in the forward programme for surface dressing next year, which will provide a more comprehensive treatment along this important route.

While a full resurfacing of all bus routes is not currently programmed, their condition continues to be monitored through inspections and FixMyStreet reports, with defects prioritised for repair based on safety and condition criteria. This approach allows us to target available funding where it will have the greatest benefit.

Response

I thank the Councillor for the question and for her robust and continuing advocacy for her division with her colleagues and you absolutely have my support.

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| <p>22. COUNCILLOR EMILY KERR</p> <p>When Cabinet took a decision that taxis should be temporarily permitted to go through the LTN ANPR points, it agreed to review this policy once the traffic filters were in place. Can you give us an update on timeline for this review?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The council committed to review the LTN ANPR points once the traffic filter trial is in operation. The trial has been delayed due to the ongoing closure of Botley Road by Network Rail. It is expected that the Botley Road will reopen in August 2026, at which point the traffic filter trial is due to commence. If monitoring data (a minimum of 6 months would likely be required) suggests that some or all of the LTN ANPR points can be adapted, the council would need to consult on any proposed changes.</p> |
| <p>23. COUNCILLOR EMILY KERR</p> <p>Can you give an update on the process and timeline for reconfiguring the dropped kerb design specification? (e.g. mandating new builds and planning recommendations for residential dropped kerb conversions in order to avoid altering the footway gradient).</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>A street design guide to better reflect current good practice and council priorities is currently being developed and will include a new design standard for dropped kerbs. Following suitable levels of engagement and consultation with relevant parties, it is hoped that the document will be presented to Cabinet in the summer. Officers are considering whether or not it is appropriate to introduce the planned new design standard for drop kerbs ahead of the adoption of the whole document and will look to do so if possible.</p> |
| <p>24. COUNCILLOR EMILY KERR</p> <p>Could you outline the process for enforcing the regulation that taxis carrying their own children on the school run should not be driving through school street ANPR cameras? And can you share data on how many fines have been issued to those who are doing this?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>I can confirm that Taxis are only exempt from school streets when picking up and dropping off a fare paying journey. At present we have not identified any drivers breaching this requirement, but if we do as well as issuing a fine, we would remove their exemption from that school street entirely. If there are concerns about potential instances of this happening, then please provide specific details to our parking team who will investigate and take appropriate action.</p> <p>Response</p> |

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| <p>I'm just questioning whether or not it's appropriate for schools to be monitoring the legal activities of parents and wondered if the cabinet member would agree to meet with me, any other interested councillors and parking officers to discuss a more systematic approach which would not require this.</p> | <p>Yes, of course, always happy to meet with the Councillor in the capacity as divisional member and as active travel champion to try and ensure that parents and all others behave responsibly and in accordance with the rules that are in place. Just tying together this question with her previous one, which didn't have a supplementary. The issue around the ANPR in Divinity Road and other places, we have always said that that exemption for taxis would be kept under review as part of the move towards the traffic filters and that will happen. And there is an important discussion to be had around learning from the congestion charge, the traffic filters, their other policies moving forward towards the end point of that Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the traffic filters. I hope all members will take a full part in that.</p> |
| <p>25. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY</p> <p>I suppose that granular data exist by day and hour about the hourly number of vehicles on each road for which measurements exist. If so, please will you provide statistics on the numbers of vehicles in each hourly segment along each road during (a) public holidays, (b) school terms, and (c) school holidays, distinguishing between state school and private school holidays. Please compare the recent monthly data with the data from the previous year.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>I have asked officers to liaise with you directly to provide this data, where available.</p> |
| <p>26. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY</p> <p>Congestion charging is now raising much more money than was assumed in the initial forecasts. Will the Cabinet now agree to provide targeted subsidies for bus fares for city residents who are excluded from the free bus services to/from Park</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The congestion charge and the free P&R offer are intended to reduce traffic and improve bus journey times in the city, and there is evidence that they are doing just that. This is delivering benefits to pedestrians, cyclists and bus users, including those who cannot afford to run a car.</p> |

& Rides. For example, at present total daily bus fares for a family with children are a major deterrent for the family to switch to buses from a car. Is it not possible, using data on deprivation, such as the HMRC data used for the City Council's effective Council Tax Reduction Scheme, to offer free bus travel inside the city to those families who currently can least afford to switch away from car use?

Supplementary

Councillor Gant says that 45% of households in the lower income areas have no access to cars. That means the majority, 55%, use cars. If you're a family with quite a few members, the cost of

In all parts of Oxford including the most deprived areas, at least 50% of commuters travel to work by non-car modes. Those commuting by non-car modes stand to benefit the most from the congestion charge.

Lower income households are much less likely to have access to a car, with 45% of households in the lowest income areas of Oxford having no access to a car compared to 23% in the highest income areas.

According to census and vehicle licensing data, the most deprived households are more likely to own vans or other commercial vehicles, which are exempt from the congestion charge. This will tend to benefit those in more deprived areas.

The spending priorities for the congestion charge are being evaluated in view of income forecasts, which are being continually updated.

Residents will note that Cllr Fry is, once again, advocating for the benefits of a policy which he and his party have opposed. Under his proposals there would be no targeted subsidies of the kind he calls for, nor would there be free travel on Park and Rides, no improvements to bus routes and timetables as introduced on November 9 and February 22, no air quality improvements, no safety gains and reduction in casualties, and no electric buses.

Perhaps Cllr Fry will also confirm which of the various different Labour policies on transport he supports since his leader in the City Council confirmed unambiguously yesterday that the Labour groups on this council and that one do not talk to each other and do not have the same policy, even when, as in the case of Cllr Fry, they are the same people.

Response

Well, a little bit like the question from Councillor Pressel. You can't stand up and say that the cost of taking a car trip will always be cheaper than the cost of taking a bus. It depends how many people, where you're going. That's just not a factual statement.

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| <p>taking the bus travel will be significantly greater than the costs of driving. Will the Cabinet please provide targeted free family bus travel to such low-income families?</p> | <p>This council has, through its policies, supported bus travel. Our policies of reducing congestion have allowed significant improvements to bus routes twice, two rounds on November the 9th and again on February the 22nd.</p> <p>They underpin the business case which has allowed the existence of 172 new electric buses on our streets, the biggest per capita fleet in the entire country. And do have a look at the trade press, by the way, around all these glowing announcements in other cities like Sheffield, which are nowhere near the quantity of electric buses that we've got in this county and have had for two years.</p> <p>We are miles ahead of the game on this. And yes, our congestion charge, which his party opposed, has generated an income stream, which is being used now to support bus travel for exactly the people that he talks about. And that will continue. And people in Oxford will hear Labour politicians standing up and saying that they support the benefits of these policies, but they're not prepared to see through the policies which deliver them.</p> <p>They hear that, as well as hearing the fact, by the way, that some Labour Councillors are members of the City Council, which has taken an entirely different view as was confirmed in writing by the leader of the city council last time. OK, let's talk about the Council here, not any other district council. I'm talking about members of this council who hold paid positions as transport spokespeople who are saying different things in different places. That's not OK.</p> |
| <p>27. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY</p> <p>PM2.5 particles are an increasingly important form of dangerous emissions. What is the Council doing to improve the comprehensive monitoring of these emissions in a similar manner to the monitoring of NOx emissions? Beyond supporting the switch from diesel to electric buses, what is the County Council</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>The County Council has adopted an Air Quality Strategy and associated Route Map containing more detailed actions. Some progress towards these actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indoor air quality monitoring project which encourages residents to borrow air quality monitors from their local libraries free of charge (https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/indoor-air-quality). This helps to raise awareness of behaviours that can lead to poor indoor air quality including wood burning which is a dominant source of PM_{2.5} emissions in Oxfordshire. We have |

proposing to do to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions from households and transport?

proactively worked with the City Council to support to loan the monitors to members of the boating community. The scheme is being expanded to 4 other libraries in areas that are known to have an increased vulnerability to health risks posed by poor air quality addressing health inequalities. Westgate is one of these libraries.

- We supported messaging on Clean Air Night regarding solid wood burning.
- Public Health commissions the better housing better health service, which supports residents to heat their homes efficiently and supports the replacement of wood burning with more environmentally friendly forms of heating.
- Trading Standards have carried out a review of the selling of wood for burning to ensure it is compliant.
- There are several transport demand management schemes which aim to lower vehicle usage in the city (zero emission zone, workplace parking levy and the temporary congestion charge – followed by the trial traffic filters) which together with the other transport measures will tackle PM_{2.5} exhaust emissions from road transport, in addition to the electric buses which Oxford City's recent air quality modelling source apportionment exercise showed buses now contribute to 0.41 % of total PM_{2.5} emissions compared to 19.29 % in the previous source apportionment exercise in 2020.
- We have modelled PM_{2.5} emissions across the entire county and have looked into health inequalities linked to air pollution and will complete a health needs assessment for air quality to enable a targeted evidence-based approach.

Monitoring

Monitoring of air quality is carried out by District and City Councils who we work with and support with their annual reporting, as well as wider partnership work, such as managing and supporting the Oxonair (oxonair.uk) website.

We have developed an internal air quality monitoring policy, to review and manage the sensors that we use, through the School Streets and green Infrastructure project, which includes PM_{2.5} monitoring.

28. COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS

Can the Cabinet member let me know when speed cameras will be installed at the Barton Park junction? I first asked this question in July 2024 and despite numerous dates being quoted the residents are still waiting. I would welcome a definite date as residents have been waiting too long for this vital safety measure to slow down traffic at this pedestrian crossing

Supplementary

There's no sense of urgency about the installation of the speed cameras and the blame has now been shifted to the police. My question is, can the cabinet member provide a list of the contacts of officers made to the police to impress upon them the urgency of installing these speed cameras?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

Thank you for your question. I am very grateful to the councillor for her continued engagement, and that of her fellow city councillors, with the very real safety concerns of residents of Barton Park about crossing the A40. As she knows I have worked hard to engage with this issue myself. Unfortunately, the root of the problem is that the city council originally included a footbridge over the A40 as part of the plans for Barton Park, but then allowed it to be dropped, resulting in a large edge-of-city residential development cut off from Oxford and from schools and other facilities by a major four-lane A road. It is very, very much harder to fix a problem like this once it is in place than to get it right in the first place. We will, however, continue to work hard to deliver the improvements which are within our competency. I'm sorry that it has taken considerably longer than anticipated to progress this scheme. Thames Valley Police (TVP) are procuring this equipment with a financial contribution from the county council and they originally suggested that the installation would progress in spring. As this is a TVP led installation, we are bound by their timeframe. When officers have a more definitive date, they will of course inform yourself and other interested stakeholders. I and officers will continue to push TVP for this to happen as soon as possible.

Response

The blame has not been shifted to the police. This has always been a project that is led by the police. Therefore, the timetable has always been up to them. And I share the Councillors frustration. They have kept on shifting the timing.

29. COUNCILLOR EMMA GARNETT

We're in a climate and ecological emergency and must protect our green spaces. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world and wildlife numbers here have declined by almost 20% since 1970.

University of Oxford and its colleges have hundreds of lawns made up of heavily mown, monocultured grass - as anyone can see from a walk around Oxford or Google maps satellite, with very few wildflower meadows or wilder patches to be found.

Kings College, Cambridge has shown that ambitious wildflower meadows on manicured quads can be a huge success for wildlife, people and public relations.

Could the County Council use its relationship with the University to encourage fewer lawns and more meadows, and what are we doing for wildflowers on our highways verges?

Refs:

<https://stateofnature.org.uk/> ;

<https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/kings-wildflower-meadow-a-break-from-the-lawn> ;

<https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2024/06/12/the-oxford-lawn-balancing-tradition-and-sustainability/>

COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

The council's Landscape and Nature Recovery Team have a working relationship with the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery and Oxford University Sustainability Team, as well as through the [Healthy Ecosystem Restoration Oxfordshire](#) group. The colleges (each a separate entity) are significant landowners within the county, with potential to make a significant contribution to the [Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) vision for a well-connected, biodiversity rich network for nature through their land management. This has been the primary focus for recent positive discussions we have had with some of the college bursars to discuss what the Local Nature Recovery Strategy means for them, and will be following up on these as we continue to build relationships.

Meanwhile, in its capacity as the Highway Authority, Oxfordshire County Council actively manages roadside verges to balance road safety, accessibility, and biodiversity, including the protection and encouragement of wildflowers. This approach is set out in the Council's [Highway Verge Maintenance policy](#) and the [Verge and Vegetation Management](#) report.

The Council has formally designated Roadside Verge Nature Reserves, areas of highway verge that are managed specifically to support wildflowers, pollinators, and other wildlife. These sites are cut less frequently and at appropriate times of year to allow plants to flower and set seed. There are currently 52 designated RVNR sites across the county.

Where it is safe and appropriate, verge management prioritises biodiversity by:

- Reducing the frequency of grass cutting outside safety-critical areas
- Timing cuts to avoid the main flowering season
- Removing arisings to prevent soil enrichment, which helps wildflowers thrive

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>I completely agree that for maintenance of verges and footways, safety and accessibility needed to be first and foremost. However, sometimes preferences for appearances conflicts with what would be best for biodiversity. Given the upcoming Lib Dem motion also emphasises pride in the appearance of the public realm, can the cabinet member reassure us that for verges and footways maintenance, biodiversity takes precedence over appearance, though not of course safety.</p> | <p>This approach aligns with national best practice and guidance from Plantlife and local biodiversity partners.</p> <p>While biodiversity is important, the Council must still meet its statutory duties. Verges at junctions, bends, crossings, and along footways and cycleways are cut more regularly to maintain visibility and safe access for all road users. These areas are not suitable for wildflower growth due to safety requirements. Not all verges are managed directly by the county council. In many urban areas, District, Town, or Parish Councils manage verge cutting under formal agency agreements. Some communities also manage verges locally for wildlife, with county council support where appropriate. This means wildflower approaches can vary by location.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>I think I'm going to have to refer that answer to officers and get back to you.</p> |
| <p>30. COUNCILLOR EMMA GARNETT</p> <p>To tackle climate change we need to tackle unsustainable transport and ensure walking and wheeling is safe for everyone to do. Illegally parked cars hinder this progress. Oxfordshire</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>It's important to note that on enforcement of yellow lines a "period of grace" is not given however, we are required to have a period of observation as things like loading and unloading are legally allowed.</p> |

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| <p>County Council currently insists that parking wardens observe cars illegally parked on Double Yellow Lines for a grace period of 10 minutes before being able to ticket them. Given updated national guidelines in October 2022 - which states that grace periods do not apply to Double Yellow Lines - many councils no longer do this. Please can you explain what Oxfordshire is doing to review this and the timeline for new parking procurement contracts where we might be able to reconsider this approach?</p> <p>See "Grace periods": https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-enforcement-of-parking-contraventions/guidance-for-local-authorities-on-enforcing-parking-restrictions</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>How many tickets have been issued by OCC for double yellow line parking this year and in previous years by geographical area? Happy to take the response by e-mail.</p> | <p>The council's operational policy is to give 5 minutes observation for private motor vehicles and 10 minutes for commercial vehicles. This observation period is laid out in the Council's Parking Policy and ensures that PCNs are not issued to customers who are legitimately loading/unloading or board/alighting.</p> <p>Officers are currently reviewing the Parking Policy with a view for consultation to commence later in the new financial year. We have discretion on the observation periods, and I can confirm these will be reviewed during this process.</p> <p>With regards to the procurement, it is expected that the contracts will be awarded in the final quarter of 2026.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>That's just as well. Thank you for drawing attention to this issue of the observation period, which as it says in the answer, is under review.</p> |
| <p>31. COUNCILLOR EMMA GARNETT</p> <p>The trend for buying larger cars and SUVs has resulted in more fuel and energy use, more greenhouse gas emissions and more climate change, as well as increasing risk of serious injuries for pedestrians in the event of a crash.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Yes, permits are withdrawn if it becomes apparent that a vehicle exceeds these limits.</p> |

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| <p>Oxfordshire County Council has size and weight limits for vehicles of 2 metres high, 2 metres wide, 5 metres long and 2.25 tonnes in weight. Are these limits checked by OCC and does OCC withdraw parking permits if they find that these limits have been breached?</p> <p>https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/parking/parking-permits/resident-parking-permits/new-residents-parking-permit https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2019/oct/25/suvs-second-biggest-cause-of-emissions-rise-figures-reveal</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>How many parking permits have been revoked due to the vehicle exceeding maximum size this year and in previous years by geographical area? Happy to take response by e-mail</p> | <p>Response</p> <p>Yes, and the answer confirms that does happen, but I'll get you the number of times it has happened.</p> |
| <p>32. COUNCILLOR LEE EVANS</p> <p>As we approach the one-year anniversary of this Council administration, I am worried about the lack of progress made to improve phone signal in rural areas. Many of my residents, in villages like Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Charney Bassett and Hinton Waldrist, suffer from poor phone signal. Yet the schemes announced so far by the Council - like the 'Mobile Digital Twin' - seem to focus more on restating the problem, not solving it. What concrete steps has the</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR BEN HIGGINS, CABINET MEMBER FOR FUTURE ECONOMY AND INNOVATION</p> <p>Mobile phone coverage is principally a matter for both the networks themselves and OFCOM as regulator, rather than the county council. The digital twin project (Digital Places) is not funded to secure interventions by the public sector for resolving mobile coverage issues. It does however provide detailed evidence of exactly where and to what extent mobile coverage is poor in locations selected for assessment. This in and of itself helps us guide residents to understand which network is the 'least bad' in these areas. It is also helping the team engage with operators, communities, and in some cases planning teams, to help navigate what could be done, which we are starting to see examples of. This is never going to provide quick fixes as much as we would want it to. Oxfordshire though is very much a leader in this area, able to lead engagement to</p> |

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| <p>Cabinet member taken to improve phone signal in rural parts of Oxfordshire?</p> | <p>a greater extent than many of our peers.</p> |
| <p>33. COUNCILLOR LEE EVANS</p> <p>It is deeply frustrating for me, and my residents, to find that after we've fought to get potholes repaired, sometimes the road is breaking up again within days and worse than ever within just a few weeks. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Council's work to check the quality of pothole repairs, including how many potholes were repaired, checked, found to be defective, and how many claims were made against contractors' guarantees of quality in the past year?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers and I fully understand how frustrating it is for residents and road users when a defect reappears shortly after work has been completed. A good number of repairs remain in good condition; however, a percentage can fail prematurely, especially during prolonged periods of wet weather. We are also carrying out a slightly higher number of temporary sweep & fill repairs at the moment which may not last as long as the sawn cut repairs. This may be done if a more complex permanent repair is needed to be planned.</p> <p>To minimise repeat failures and reduce associated claims, the Council undertakes post completion quality inspections on a proportion of completed repairs.</p> <p>Any works identified as substandard are rectified promptly at no additional cost to the authority, though the frustration and disruption to the public this causes is recognised. Where recurring quality issues are identified, these are addressed through formal contractual performance management mechanisms (this can include financial and other penalties).</p> <p>Officers are also using the recent challenges to jointly improve on defect management; including inspection coverage, works instruction quality and data, achieving improved "right first time" outcomes, maximising value of FMS SuperUsers.</p> <p>Liability is identified either through our random quality inspection or when a defect fails within the guarantee period and it is agreed this is due to workmanship or non-compliance with policy.</p> <p>For the proactive quality inspections, a percentage of defects are randomly chosen for quality inspections. Any defects found to have quality issues or non-completion to instruction. are raised as 'non-chargeable defects' (NCDs). MGroup do have the have the opportunity to challenge the concerns raised and provide evidence why they shouldn't be non-chargeable. This is then agreed (or not) with Oxfordshire County</p> |

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| | <p>Council officers.</p> <p>In terms of numbers identified as part of the defects quality inspection checks, 452 potential NCDs have been reported this financial year resulting in 219 agreed. Not all defects cost the same, but assuming the current average cost per defect is approximately £125, the cost to MGroup for the return visits to date is approximately £27k.</p> |
| <p>34. COUNCILLOR LEE EVANS</p> <p>Anecdotally, usage of the Stanford Quarry tip (Household Waste Recycling Centre) is significantly down since the Council imposed its unnecessary requirements on residents when using the tip earlier this year. If this is the case, it would be deeply concerning - and may be consistent with more fly-tipping and/or less recycling. Can the Cabinet Member provide usage figures for the Stanford Quarry tip, and other HWRCs, for the 13 months up to month-end February 2026, so we can see the impact of the Council's new tips policy on visits?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>The OCC Waste Management team have been liaising with district council colleagues through the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership operational and enforcement groups. To date, no increases in fly tipping have been brought to the attention of the team, nor any new trends emerging since changes were introduced within the HWRCs.</p> <p>As part of the changes, a reduction in visitor numbers was anticipated through improved measures to prevent illegal trader abuse of the service, as well as fewer non-Oxfordshire residents using the services, both of which come at a cost to the service. Intelligence from other authorities suggests booking systems lead to customers planning their visits better, delivering more on each trip to the HWRC, but making fewer overall visits. It is also worth noting there have been spells bad weather since the service changes were introduced which often impacts service usage.</p> <p>HWRC traffic data supplied in Appendix 1 below. Please note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic data has to be treated as indicative, as this will include other traffic movements beyond pure HWRC visitor vehicle movements (e.g. operational traffic) - Traffic count data for Stanford and Dix Pit HWRCs is not included as these systems had periods of faultiness across several months in this period. We believe that visitor trends should not be too dissimilar to the other HWRCs. - This is a very narrow data set drawn from what is typically a quiet time of year, and longer term trends and other data sets need to be analysed to fully |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>It's disappointing not to have usage data for the Stanford Quarry tip in my division and also the Dix Pit tip. Can the cabinet member write to me with the usage data that is available, including the necessary caveats?</p> | <p>understand the impacts on the service.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The problem with the data at the moment is that it takes several months to collect them. And so, I think we provided you with what's available at the moment. The actual traffic data, as I've identified, is not specific because it does monitor other vehicles that go to and from the various sites. So that's why it requires a few more months before we get some accurate data. When we get some, we will publish it.</p> |
| <p>35. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>During March I visited multiple locations around Didcot and nearby villages where tree, hedgerow and vegetation clearance has been taking place as part of the HIF1 road works, following concerns raised by residents.</p> <p>Despite the widely recognised start of bird nesting season on 1 March, under guidance associated with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, significant areas of trees and hedgerows were still being removed. Residents are understandably concerned about the potential impact this may have on nesting birds, wildlife and local biodiversity. On the occasions I visited these sites I did not observe any ecological supervision present.</p> <p>Given that the HIF1 scheme was approved in December 2024 and the council has therefore had considerable time to plan these works,</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>The guidance in relation to the 1st March date is in respect of management of trees and hedges. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 that is applicable is focused on the protection of wild birds (schedule 1) and this is complied with.</p> <p>For both HIF1 and NPR3 the contractors have professional ecologists who undertook a pre-work survey before any work started.</p> <p>For HIF1 ecologists come to site every 48 hours to do a wide range of inspections for all ecology, including nesting birds.</p> <p>No trees or hedges have been or will be removed that show any signs of birds nesting. If any active nests are found, work will stop and mitigations, such as buffer zones, put in place.</p> <p>With the above controls in place to protect the birds, it allows us to continue to make progress with the scheme.</p> <p>For NPR3 I have been informed that two ecologists were on site on Monday 16 March to carry out pre-work checks and have adjusted the method of working in line with their</p> |

residents are questioning why this vegetation clearance was not completed before the start of nesting season. Residents have also now begun receiving letters regarding vegetation clearance associated with the Didcot Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3), scheduled to begin during the week commencing 16 March, raising further concerns that additional habitat may be removed during nesting season and may affect wildlife potentially displaced by the HIF1 works.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm what ecological supervision, mitigation measures and compliance checks are currently in place for vegetation clearance associated with both the HIF1 and NPR3 schemes during bird nesting season, and explain why this work was not completed prior to the start of the nesting period?

Supplementary

But this goes beyond technical compliance. The council itself is clearing trees and hedgerows in bird nesting season. It's not illegal, but it's the optics. So, will the cabinet member now acknowledge that this is a failure of planning and leadership and apologise to residents for the council missing the very wildlife and environmental standards it expects developers to follow.

findings to ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed. We are ensuring that the ecologists continuously supervise the works on site.

Vegetation clearance works at NPR3 mainly involve the trimming back of highway hedges where they are overhanging the verges and cutting/ strimming of verges.

Response

Well, we haven't missed it. We have followed the environmental standards, absolutely. And they have had gone out and they have fulfilled the requirements of the planning permission in total, and they are still doing so as we speak.

36. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON

The proposed NPR3 road has increasingly been referred to in the press as a “road to nowhere.” Planning permission granted in 2012 has now lapsed, and the council recently told the BBC that it was “looking at ways to accelerate construction of the whole road.” However, in November the council stated in several pieces of correspondence that construction would begin in 2026.

Given that the planning permission has now lapsed, and residents have seen years of delay on this project, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether construction will still begin in 2026 as previously stated? If not, will she acknowledge that this is yet another example of this Liberal Democrat administration over-promising on infrastructure delivery and failing to deliver the roads and connectivity that residents and businesses across the county rely on?

Supplementary

So, to be clear, what residents were previously told that construction would begin in 2026 is no longer the case. Isn't the reality that this project is drifting further and further away? Will the cabinet member now admit that repeatedly giving optimistic timelines that are then missed time and time again, risks undermining public confidence, and that this is starting to look like yet another example of administration over

COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

The programme has been revised with planning application expected to be submitted in winter 2026/27.

Construction will start once permission has been granted and relevant conditions discharged.

Officers are speaking with developers to coordinate timely delivery of both sections of the road.

Response

No, I wouldn't agree with that. It is something that we are in current discussions with the developers on and it seems that the developers are being more enthusiastic than they have been in the past about delivering their section.

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| <p>promising on vital infrastructure for Didcot.</p> | |
| <p>37. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>There has been considerable discussion in recent weeks, both in the media and on social media, about the amount being spent on pothole repairs across Oxfordshire.</p> <p>In particular, the MP for Didcot and Wantage, Oly Glover, has publicly claimed that £40 million is being spent on pothole repairs alone.</p> <p>However, my understanding is that the £40 million figure relates to a much broader range of highway maintenance activities, including drainage works, road resurfacing, footway repairs, and other essential maintenance, rather than pothole repairs specifically.</p> <p>To avoid confusion by our MP's and ensure residents are provided with accurate information, can the Cabinet Member confirm exactly how much funding has been allocated specifically for pothole repairs in the 2025/26 financial year?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>I can confirm that the budget allocation for highway safety defects (which is mainly potholes but not entirely) for 2025/26 is £4.54m, though the forecast for spend is £5.2m, with £4.4m being spent repairing potholes that are considered a safety concern. This reactive maintenance is revenue funded. In addition to this, potholes that are not considered an immediate safety concern are be repaired as part of planned works through our patching work or by the dragon patcher for example. The £48.8m of capital highway maintenance is made up of various programmes but of this, around £32m is allocated to carriageways for the prevention or fixing of potholes.</p> |
| <p>38. COUNCILLOR GARRETH EPPS</p> <p>The village of Wigginton in my division has no bus stop. The 488 bus stops nearby, but in 2024</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers have investigated the provision of bus stops near to Wigginton to access service 488, including a site meeting held in 2024 which was attended by</p> |

after efforts to formalise a bus stop, Thames Valley Police effectively prohibited the bus stopping nearby. This means residents have to walk almost 2 miles along the busy Hook Norton-Milcombe Road, with no footway or lighting, if they want to catch the bus, which several do. Thames Valley Police also refuse to comment on what measures might overcome their objection to Wigginton residents catching the bus without this dangerous walk.

The County Council is supposed to be in a "road safety partnership" with Thames Valley Police. Will the Lead Member meet with me and invite the police to broker a solution, or does he share my view that TVP's commitment to road safety appears to exist in name only?

Supplementary

If we can agree safety mitigations and a way forward at Wigginton, and I've been having more constructive conversations with officers than perhaps the answer implies, would the lead member work with me to remove the ridiculous objection from Thames Valley Police that leaves teenagers in Wigginton having to walk 2 miles along the dangerous road to Hook Norton to catch the bus.

representatives from our Highways team, Thames Valley Police, the bus operator and the parish council. A number of potential locations were investigated however, no safe location was found.

Officers work with representatives from Thames Valley Police and the relevant bus operator when investigating locations for bus stops, to select locations that all parties are satisfied are acceptably safe. In this instance, all the parties were in agreement that there is no safe location near to Wigginton and this was reluctantly accepted by the parish council.

Officers consider there have been no material changes that would warrant re-investigating this at the present time.

Response

Yes.

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| <p>39. COUNCILLOR ANDREW CRICHTON</p> <p>On Dukes Meadow Drive in my division, on the west side of Hanwell Brook, there is a section of road that floods heavily. It has flooded repeatedly and consistently since I was first elected as a District Councillor in 2022 and over this past winter has flooded more than I have ever seen it flood before. Causing misery for pedestrians and drivers alike. It appears to be due to several drains in the road that, though seemingly unblocked, are not draining water. I know this has been raised repeatedly by residents. Can you confirm if this issue is being investigated by the Highways team, and do you have any update I can pass to residents on this matter? Are we any closer to understand why this happens?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>I appreciate the comprehensive answer and ask, please really meet with me on this issue so that we can help the decision actually be made on which option to take</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Thank you for your Question regarding the Drainage on Dukes Meadow Drive.</p> <p>As part of the investment into scheduled gully cleansing this financial year, 25/26, officers have confirmed that all the gullies on Dukes Meadow Drive, particularly in the area in question, were inspected and cleansed during May 2025. In light of the concerns raised by Cllr Crichton, officers have been requested to undertake further investigation into the potential reasons why the gullies and drains are not draining as quickly as they possibly should be. Officers do have a fairly long list of similar sites for investigations however, officers have confirmed that this location will be added to the list.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Yes, of course, very happy to do that</p> |
| <p>40. COUNCILLOR JAMES BARLOW</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member reassure the parents, carers and staff of St Nicholas' Primary School Wallingford that from opening on 1st September 2026 there will be both a suitably-surfaced durable and direct walking and wheeling route to the school's new site that is</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers from the Countryside Access team and the Place Planning team have been working closely with Cllr Barlow, the representatives from the Diocese, the school, the representatives from the housing developers, and residents of Wantage Road to ensure that there are improvements to the footpath ahead of the school opening. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) officers have been trying to understand the</p> |

appropriate for infants and buggies etc along PRow 390/16/30 from Fir Tree Avenue to the new Highcroft estate, and a safe crossing provided across Fir Tree Avenue adjacent to PRow 390/16/30. Ideally, the Head Teacher notes, the path and crossing would both actually be ready from end June 2026 to allow for the children and carers to use it for the transition days in July.

proposed works as provided by the developer so an informed decision can be made before going ahead with any option to ensure that whatever is progressed does not generate new problems further down the line. The team are aligned with Cllr Barlow on this as it will be a suitable route to the school and will help to improve the Walk to School initiatives, thus having positive impacts on the air quality and health and wellbeing of the school community.

Furthermore, officers from the Behaviour Change and Travel Plans team have been working with the schools in Wallingford to help increase awareness and levels of active travel, through the development and delivery of the school travel plans which highlights ways to improve and enable sustainable and active journeys to and from school. The team are funding the creation of an active travel map for the new St Nicholas school which will be handed out to new parents joining the school and will appear on the school website, aiding decisions on how to travel to the school. It will highlight key walking and cycling routes to the school and indicative locations of where parents should park if they have driven to school so they may "park and stride".

It is worth noting that works have recently been completed by the Countryside Access team on the footpath 390/28/10 that is to the south of the school. This still provides suitable access from Fir Tree Avenue (appreciating that this would be a longer walk to the school than footpath 390/16/30), as well as the forthcoming improvements at Queens Avenue by the developer following completion of the build out of the site.

Every effort is being made to ensure that the path is open ahead of the transition days in July 2026. The team will continue to meet regularly as a group with Cllr Barlow those mentioned above to update on progress made.

Regarding the crossing mentioned across Fir Tree Avenue adjacent to the PRow. This is a side-road entry treatment over Fir Tree Avenue, which will provide a safe crossing. Some community infrastructure funding has recently been received towards its delivery. The team are looking at the programme for this and will continue keep you informed of progress of this as part of the ongoing meetings.

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| <p>41. COUNCILLOR JAMES BARLOW</p> <p>When will OCC fulfil its acknowledged responsibility and provide an appropriate surface and drainage to a key Wallingford active travel route, Croft Villas, so that it can return to being usable when it rains?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Given the action described has happened three times before, please can we arrange a visit to Wallingford from the Cabinet member and relevant Highways officers to look at this and other pavement issues that we have?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>As Cllr Barlow has stated, Oxfordshire County Council Highways maintains Croft Villas as a metaled Public Right of Way. Over the past decade, Croft Villas has received regular maintenance. Recently, it was identified that the drainage system required cleaning and jetting, specifically targeting the main carrier pipe due to reported slow draining. This work was completed on 19 February.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Yes, sounds like it's going to be a full day in Wallingford.</p> |
| <p>42. COUNCILLOR JAMES BARLOW</p> <p>When will the 136 bus service from Wallingford to Cholsey station have frequent peak time journeys, that connect with train times, reinstated?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Service 136 has recently been improved from its previous hourly frequency to a half-hourly frequency throughout the day, providing many more journey opportunities between Wallingford and Cholsey in line with our policy to improve public transport services; however, we are aware of the gap in the morning peak period.</p> <p>The Council has been quoted a cost of £29,500 per annum to provide two additional journeys in the morning peak, which is not considered to represent value for money. This would represent a 31% increase in the overall cost of service 136, which is not</p> |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Can we have a conversation about this, please?</p> | <p>sustainable.</p> <p>Whilst a journey by bus from Wallingford to Reading is longer than a journey by bus to Cholsey, the much shorter journey time by train to London reduces the time difference. For example, in the event a 136 journey was available, a commuter catching the 07:22 train from Cholsey could reasonably expect to leave Wallingford at about 07:00 and arrive at London Paddington at 08:23; by catching the current X40 from Wallingford at 07:10, a commuter could expect to arrive at London Paddington by 08:35 – almost identical journey times, and at similar cost.</p> <p>As the County Council and Thames Travel have invested heavily in service X40 with brand new buses and an improved timetable, commuters also have a much greater choice of journey times with buses running from early until late seven days per week.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Yes, it looks like we're going to Cholsey as well. Looking forward to it.</p> |
| <p>43. COUNCILLOR ROBIN JONES</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member confirm that the public consultation on the draft revised Minerals and Waste Local Plan proceeded in Jan-Feb 2026 as outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Review Timetable and therefore that work towards the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (MWDS) is on schedule for Adoption in March 2027?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>In July 2025, Cabinet agreed to cease producing a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making system and prepare to produce the plan under the new plan-making system, proposed by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, once it was brought into effect. Therefore, there is no current timetable for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan production, nor are we seeking to adopt by March 2027 and consequently no consultation was undertaken in January/February 2026.</p> <p>The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act commencement regulations relevant to Local Plans were made on 2 March 2026 and the substantive plan making sections comes into effect on 25 March 2026. We are now examining these Regulations, the new plan making guidance and the implications for the new Minerals and Waste Plan. A new timetable for the production of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan will be published in due course.</p> |

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| | <p>If Councillor Jones would like to discuss the Minerals and Waste Plan, the Minerals and Waste Policy and Strategy Team would be more than happy to meet.</p> |
| <p>44. COUNCILLOR ROBIN JONES</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member please advise on the status of the 'B480 scheme' or the proposal for the creation of a LTN from the Grenoble Road roundabout towards Oxford? Has this scheme been sequestered for now in light of the proposed Northfields and South Oxford Science Village developments?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>There are no proposals for an LTN for the B480.</p> <p>As part of an emerging development proposal at the Northfield site https://my.engaged.space/northfield/#home, the developer has proposed a diversion of the Oxford Road between the B480 and Garsington for vehicle traffic, with the current road maintained for cycle and pedestrian use.</p> <p>The county council has undertaken high-level design work for the B480 to help inform potential highway proposals in this area.</p> <p>Should a developer bring forward proposals, it is anticipated that residents, stakeholders and the wider would have an opportunity to input into design proposals as part of a consultation process.</p> |
| <p>45. COUNCILLOR ROBIN JONES</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please update as to the status of the Science Vale Movement and Place Plan?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>The Science Vale Movement and Place Plan (MAP Plan) was adopted by cabinet on 27 January 2026 and has been published on the Oxfordshire County Council website alongside an overview chapter. The MAP Plans form Part 2 of the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and sit alongside a number of other supporting strategies (such as the Freight and Logistics Strategy and the Active Travel Strategy). The MAP Plans are policy guidance documents and will be used to support future workstreams, scheme development, funding bids, responses to planning applications and developer contributions. They will remain live documents, with regular updates to ensure that they reflect the latest policy guidance, future Local Plans and</p> |

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| | <p>strategies, and the development of schemes. The teams will continue to work towards the objectives and proposals contained within the delivery plan of the Science Vale MAP Plan.</p> |
| <p>46. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Can you please confirm how much M-Group have had to cover the cost for pothole repairs that have failed?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>233 defects have not been charged back despite OCC inspectors raising quality issues. Why are officers allowing so many poorly fixed potholes to not be charged back?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Liability is identified either through our random quality inspection or when a defect fails within the guarantee period and it is agreed this is due to workmanship or noncompliance with policy.</p> <p>For the proactive quality inspections, a percentage of defects are randomly chosen for quality inspections. Any defects found to have quality issues or non-completion to instruction. are raised as 'non-chargeable defects' (NCDs). MGroup do have the have the opportunity to challenge the concerns raised and provide evidence why they shouldn't be non-chargeable. This is then agreed (or not) with Oxfordshire County Council officers.</p> <p>In terms of numbers identified as part of the defects quality inspection checks, 452 potential NCDs have been reported this financial year resulting in 219 agreed. Not all defects cost the same, but assuming the current average cost per defect is approximately £125, the cost to MGroup for the return visits to date is approximately £27k.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Well, obviously, there's a process for assessing whether something counts as an NCD or not. I don't run that process, so I can't answer that question</p> |

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| <p>47. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Given the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Safety has been stripped of her main role overseeing the Fire and Rescue service, is this Cabinet post now redundant and removing it could therefore save taxpayers money?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Unless Councillor Hannaby is going to be assisting with births or deaths, surely this portfolio is barely doing anything. And whilst trading standards is important, can this not be absorbed by yourself or the deputy leader, thus saving the taxpayers 24,672 pounds per year?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Safety has assumed responsibility for the Registration and Coroner’s services and is responsible for other vital services such as emergency planning and trading standards, which I hope Cllr Walker will agree are of paramount importance in maintaining the wellbeing and safety of our residents, especially those who are most vulnerable.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Well, I have to say that I have plenty on my plate. Thank you, Councillor Walker, without having to take on trading standards and emergency planning. And I think you will agree with me that these are really important to our residents and deserve the attention that Councillor Hannaby is able to give as part of her portfolio to these very important items.</p> |
| <p>48. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Please breakdown for each household waste recycling site the recorded number of visits since 1st September 2025 until the latest data collected in March.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>Data supplied in Appendix 2 below for traffic data. Please note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic data has to be treated as indicative, as this will include other traffic movements beyond pure HWRC visitor vehicle movements (e.g. operational traffic) - Traffic count data for Stanford and Dix Pit HWRCs is not included as these systems had periods of faultiness across several months in this period. We believe that visitor trends should not be too dissimilar to the other HWRCs. - Visitor numbers vary through the year, with far fewer customers visiting HWRCs in the winter compared with spring, summer and autumn. HWRCs are typically far busier in September and October, and a comparison to February will normally show a significant difference in visitor numbers without factoring in service change. We have included data from Jan 2025 so comparisons can be |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Are you concerned that the sites like Alkerton down 48% compared to February last year and Drayton down 38% is not a serious concern for her and officers?</p> | <p>made for the same period last year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The period since the service changes is a very narrow time period, drawn from what is typically a quiet time of year, and longer-term trends and other data sets need to be analysed to fully understand the impacts on the service. <p>Response</p> <p>Again, I think the problem is, whilst the visits appear to be down, we haven't had the answer yet about the tonnage and that is going to take at least another two months to come through. And if we do discover that people are going less but dropping off more for each visit, I think that can only be a positive message going forward.</p> |
| <p>49. COUNCILLOR GAVIN MCLAUHLAN</p> <p>Given the parlous state of the roads through the historic village of Warborough please can cabinet confirm a date when the road (A329) through Warborough will be resurfaced, it is dangerous. I have had the following from the Highways Engagement team: "the A329 Warborough has been flagged in our database for a resurfacing scheme and is currently awaiting review by the relevant team. While I am unable to provide a specific timescale for these works now, please rest assured that the scheme is on the team's radar, and any necessary works will be planned accordingly." This road is in considerably worse shape than the Abingdon Road in Dorchester was before it was resurfaced last year. I am embarrassed monthly when I attend the Parish Council meeting in their Greet Hall, and have to pick my way through the potholes to get there.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Two schemes have been identified in this area, subject to funding approval in future financial years. One is for edge strengthening of a section of the A329 to the north of Warborough from just north of Lower Grange to Town Hill, and the other is for surface dressing from Town Hill through to the junction with the Henley Road.</p> <p>If approved, details will be added on the map at the following link which shows information on all our schemes: https://oxfordshire.highway-iams.uk/Live/PBLC_ANON/PIP/?cg=scheme</p> <p>Officers will continue to inspect and carry out any safety defect repairs necessary in the meantime though.</p> |

| <p>Supplementary</p> | <p>Response</p> |
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| <p>Councillor Gant, in answer to questions 49, 50 and 51, I'm suggesting maybe an overnight stay in Wallingford might be a good idea because we would love you to come and visit Warborough, Benson and other parts of the area.</p> <p>50. COUNCILLOR GAVIN MCLAUCHLAN</p> <p>Can the cabinet member please confirm the overall plans for Benson Lane in Crowmarsh please? This section of road has recently been subject to a consultation on speed limits, and has a multitude of other projects associated with it, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A path continuation from the new estate (French Gardens) to Benson Lane b. A crossing from the above path across Benson Lane to get to the pavement opposite c. The clearance of a pre-existing overgrown path as a suitable alternative route to the above d. The future of the old SODC site which was burnt down a few years ago (probably a district issue more than OCC) e. Rejigging the bus routes through Crowmarsh to run both ways down Benson Lane to incorporate new traffic lights on the A4074 and a bus only entrance into Benson Lane f. An extended path and cycle way from | <p>I am looking forward to it. And by the way, apologies for not having an answer to question 50, which has been supplied and will be communicated in writing</p> <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The Movement and Place Plans (referred to as “MAP Plans”) are a supporting strategy to the council’s Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), which was adopted in July 2022. The MAP Plans form Part 2 of the LTCP and outline how the vision, targets, and outcomes of the LTCP will be delivered in locations across the county. The MAP Plans outline more detailed plans for specific locations and key travel corridors in the county and will be used to guide future workstreams, scheme development, funding bids, responses to planning applications, developer contributions and will support and enable sustainable growth. Each MAP Plan sets out a series of Objectives with the focus of these being to develop liveable, healthy neighbourhoods and to help demonstrate and achieve integration across different modes. Each objective is supported by a series of actions that set out how the objective will help towards achieving the aims and targets of the LTCP. The Objectives and Actions will pick up the separate workstreams and tie them together into a delivery plan for the Highway Authority to take forward in this area. At present the MAP Plan for Wallingford and the Surrounding Area we anticipate starting work on this MAPP in Q4 2026 with its adoption estimated in be Q3 2027.</p> <p>The Benson Lane Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) scheme has been put together by Place Planning officers to coordinate the spending of various pots of funding to deliver improvements to the Benson Lane area in conjunction with each other. This includes item 1) and 2) the provision of a zebra crossing outside the French</p> |

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| <p>Benson Lane leading to Benson Marina</p> <p>g. The potential siting of a new Fire Station in Benson Lane</p> <p>h. Potential "Bloor 2" housing estate on land opposite Howbery Park on Benson Lane</p> <p>The whole project needs to be looked at in a holistic fashion not piecemeal as currently seems to be the case.</p> | <p>Gardens access and a link to the hogging path in the site; item 5) the implementation of a bus gate at the Benson Lane junction with the A4074 and associated movement of bus stops onto Benson Lane, item 6) an upgrade to the shared use path on the A4074 extending from the junction with Benson Lane to the informal crossing point. The scheme is also looking to provide a new TOUCAN crossing over the A4074 at the location of the informal crossing to connect people walking and cycling between Benson and Crowmarsh Gifford. Additional feasibility work to develop key elements of the scheme is due to commence early in the new financial year. Officers will carry out briefings with local members and key stakeholders as this feasibility work commences to discuss the scope of proposed improvements and the programme for delivery.</p> <p>Item c requires clarification as to which path is being referenced. If this is a footpath on our public right of way network, then our Countryside Access officers will be able to assist with these queries, or these can be logged onto Fix My Street by any resident.</p> <p>Item d is not a County Council matter as the land is owned by the South Oxfordshire District Council. However, should an opportunity arise to discuss the land use and its impact on the highway network, then all teams would welcome a conversation about this.</p> <p>With respect to item g, the current fire station in Wallingford is located in a conservation area and has a listed façade, meaning OCC cannot easily adapt the building to the needs of a modern fire station. The need for relocation was set out within the recent consultation on proposals made by the Fire and Rescue Service for improvements. That consultation is now being analysed and future changes will be subject to decisions by cabinet. Should the principle of relocation be supported, there are a number of potential sites which would need to be assessed and reviewed in the usual way, including considering any impact on Benson Lane, if that should be a site of potential interest.</p> <p>Regarding item h; a housing application is currently live for the land east of Benson Lane and can be found here: Planning Application P25/S4092/O. The Single Response is still being coordinated internally and the application as a whole is still under</p> |
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| | <p>consideration, however, officers within Place Planning and Coordination have worked with officers in Transport Development Management and Public Transport to ensure that this is sensitively responded to in line with the aforementioned items, as well as wider strategy works such as the Wallingford Area LCWIP which is due to go to CMD in April 2026 for formal approval.</p> |
| <p>51. COUNCILLOR GAVIN MCLAUCHLAN</p> <p>Having asked the residents and the Parish Council of Benson to input into a consultation on the "Mobility Hub" last September we have heard nothing. What is the current plan for this looking like? There are other village plans which are predicated on what happens to the Mobility Hub, all of which are currently on hold until such time as they hear back on what actually will be committed to...and when.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The public consultation for the Benson mobility hub concluded in October last year. Since then, we've been carefully reviewing all the responses that were submitted and, at the same time, conducting a road safety audit for the design. We are now in the final stages of completing a preliminary design, which should be ready very soon. Additionally, we're actively looking at various funding streams to help ensure we can move ahead to construction with greater certainty and less risk.</p> <p>The report summarising the public consultation responses will be published shortly. Alongside this, we are making plans to arrange briefings for members and the local parish in the coming weeks, so everyone will be kept informed about next steps and commitments.</p> |
| <p>52. COUNCILLOR JAMES PLUMB</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member provide the number of pothole repairs completed across the Marcham & Cumnor Division between 12th December 2025 and 12th March 2026, together with the proportion of those completed within the council's standard 28-day repair timeframe?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The number of pothole repairs completed across the Marcham & Cumnor Division between 12 December 2025 and 12 March 2026 was 165. Of these, 104 were completed within the 28-day repair timeframe.</p> |

53. COUNCILLOR JAMES PLUMB

Two months have now passed since local organisations, including Cumnor Parish Council, submitted their feedback on the draft freight study covering the B4017, B4044 and B4449. Residents and parish representatives are understandably keen to understand the next steps. Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the current status of the study, including when we can expect a timeline for the recommended actions, further engagement with affected Parish Councils, and clarity on how their feedback is being incorporated into the final version?

Supplementary

I'd like to thank the cabinet member for her response and I know she'll understand what an important issue this is for Cumnor parish, but can she be any more specific on when local communities can expect to be re-engaged on this issue and what steps are being taken to ensure there are no further delays?

COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

I wish to thank you and the parishes for your comments during the engagement period in January. This scheme is interdependent with the work on the Windrush Valley Freight Study, which has taken longer to progress and agree next steps than anticipated.

The stakeholder engagement for the Windrush Valley project has led to suggestions that also cover the area south of the A40 and includes the B4017, B4044 and B4449 area. Officers are seeking to respond to likely consequences of the suggestions made on the Windrush Valley Study and conclude that study before then turning attention back to the B4017, B4044 and B4449.

Officers will be mindful of whether the suggestions made for the Windrush Valley meet the objectives of the B4017, B4044 and B4449 Parishes. Whilst it was hoped to be able to run both projects side by side, as was taking place at the end of last year, increased workloads in other areas such as the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043, has meant this hasn't been possible.

It is expected that the Windrush Valley report will be completed by Spring, and to progress work on the B4017, B4044 and B4449 before the Summer.

Response

I'm afraid I can't give you any dates. I too am enthusiastically following this particular one. But as it does demonstrate in the answer, in fact yesterday we were in discussion about the Windrush Valley and obviously the outcomes, I'm getting nodding from the other side of the chamber, the outcomes of that will have an effect on the outcomes of this project. So, we need to know exactly where we're going with this but it's hot on the top of my list as well to progress this one.

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| <p>54. COUNCILLOR JAMES PLUMB</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member outline what steps are being taken to improve communication between officers and elected members regarding highways and maintenance works in our divisions? In particular, will the Council consider implementing automated notification systems so that councillors receive timely alerts when works are scheduled, commenced, delayed, or completed? Improved and consistent communication would greatly enhance our ability to keep residents informed and manage expectations locally.</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR NEIL FAWCETT, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I completely agree that we need to improve the communications with councillors over highways schemes taking place in their divisions. We ought to be in a position to let our local residents know when work is going to be taking place, and even more important now that road improvement schemes, gully clearing etc. are happening much more often across the county.</p> <p>Our Highways Maintenance teams have been working closely with our corporate communications team and the M Group contractor teams to enhance the way we provide updates and information.</p> <p>One of the key improvements has been the addition of a series of dedicated information pages in the Councillors' section of Hive, OCC's internal information repository. These new pages are designed to supplement the existing updates sent to members, which include regular emails and calls from our teams.</p> <p>We fully recognise that there's always room to improve how we communicate, and we're committed to ongoing collaboration across all teams involved in order to achieve that. The aim is to ensure councillors have the information they need to keep residents informed and manage expectations locally.</p> |
| <p>55. COUNCILLOR THOMAS ASHBY</p> <p>I, along with many residents, have noted the rapid rise in the number of vape shops, off-licenses, and barbers selling nicotine and other similar products on our High Streets. While many operate legitimately, there is growing concern regarding those exploiting young people.</p> <p>I recently witnessed an off license in Witney failing to conduct age verification checks. It was</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JENNY HANNABY, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND SAFETY</p> <p>Trading Standards has dedicated resources focused specifically on tackling the issues of illegal vapes, tobacco, and underage sales. Every year, we undertake extensive operations to combat these illegal activities and protect our residents, despite the many competing demands on our service. While the primary focus of your question was underage sales, it's important to highlight the close link with illegal products such as single-use vapes and cheap illegal tobacco, which are particularly attractive to underage buyers and therefore a significant part of our enforcement work.</p> |

evident that products were being sold to individuals who appeared well under the age of 16 without any request for ID.

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm the steps the Council is taking to safeguard our youth? Specifically, I request details on:

- The frequency and nature of Trading Standards inspections.
- The number of shops that have failed test purchases, including their general locations.
- The total number of complaints and active investigations involving these establishments.

Attached you will find the statistics requested for the financial years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026, illustrating the significant volume of work Trading Standards has delivered and our ongoing commitment to combating illegal tobacco, vapes, and underage sales. We continue to balance this vital activity alongside our wider responsibilities, always aiming to maximise our impact with the limited resources available.

It's also worth noting the upcoming Tobacco and Vapes Bill currently progressing through Parliament. If enacted, potentially by January 2026, this new legislation will create a smoke-free generation, make it increasingly difficult for underage individuals to access vapes, and introduce fixed penalties for underage sales. These changes will allow for swifter action and reduce the need for lengthy court processes, enabling Trading Standards to respond more quickly to incidents.

In response to the specific incident reported in Witney, it would be extremely helpful to have further information about the shop where the underage sale was witnessed. Details like this are vital for us to direct our resources effectively, target our enforcement work where it's most needed, and justify the use of directed surveillance or underage test purchasing exercises when appropriate.

We encourage constituents and councillors to report concerns directly to Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice consumer helpline, operated by our partner Citizens Advice. Reports made to the helpline are routed to the relevant Trading Standards service and also help us gather national intelligence and provide advice to consumers. The Citizens Advice consumer helpline is available on 0808 223 1133 (Relay UK textphone: 18001 then 0808 223 1133), Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays).

Thank you again for raising these important concerns. Please let me know if you need any further information or clarification.

56. COUNCILLOR THOMAS ASHBY

For seven years, Oxfordshire County Council has deliberated on the installation of two crossings on Deer Park Road. Despite repeated assurances that these projects were moving forward, the last 12 months can be defined through "dither and delay" regarding 'liability' concerns. This prolonged inaction is unacceptable.

To rectify this situation and restore public trust, I ask that the Cabinet Member:

- Instruct the Director of Highways to contact me personally to arrange an onsite visit at these locations.
- As a gesture of goodwill, fast-track the Colwell Brook / Olley Crescent S106 Delivery Works into the Phase 1 Programme.

Moving these works from Phase 2 to Phase 1 would demonstrate that the Council prioritises the safety and wellbeing of West Witney residents, who currently feel severely let down.

Supplementary

I wonder whether the cabinet member could provide an update on all of the accelerated delivery schemes in Witney and provide a timeline in writing.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

It can be confirmed that the project related to path improvements between Downs Road and Book End, Witney (Route 34 in the Witney LCWIP) has recently been passed to the Delivery Team, as part of the S106 Accelerated Delivery programme.

In order to develop the proposals, and to ensure they fit with local requirements, the team will now arrange a site meeting with Cllr Ashby to walk and talk the route and inform the progression of design and development of a works programme, including any formal consultations that may be required. As of January 2026, not all developer funds secured for the project have been received by the county council. Any programme of works will be subject to all developer funding being held by the county council.

As a Cabinet member I would not of course seek to "instruct" the Director of Highways or any other officer to do anything. I am grateful to them for the actions described in the answer.

Response

Yes, of course. And indeed the question of identifying a works programme goes alongside the question of identifying the funding, which refers back in a way to a similar question asked by Councillor Gaul earlier. We want to do these schemes, but then it's a boring fact that somebody has to pay for them.

57. COUNCILLOR THOMAS ASHBY

West Oxfordshire District Council is proceeding with plans to develop 18,000 homes across the district, with 5,000 specifically designated for the Witney area.

While the new Movement and Place Plans are a positive step, they lack, or likely will lack fully funded, practical solutions for the inevitable surge in traffic. For instance, despite 1400 homes being planned for Burford Road, there are no provisions to upgrade Dry Lane, a key arterial route to the Wychwoods.

Furthermore, Witney is still reliant on a single River Windrush crossing; it is essential that the Council mandates developer contributions toward the West End Link Road.

How does the Council intend to mitigate these infrastructure pressures across all 5000 proposed homes?

COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

The Movement and Place Plans (referred to as “MAP Plans”) are part of the council’s [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (LTCP), which was adopted in July 2022. The MAP Plans form Part 2 of the LTCP and sit alongside other council policies and strategies. The MAP Plans are policy guidance documents and will be used to support future workstreams, scheme development, funding bids, responses to planning applications and developer contributions. They will remain live documents, with regular updates to ensure that they reflect the latest policy guidance, future Local Plans and strategies, and the development of schemes.

The draft West Oxfordshire Lowlands Movement and Place Plan has been advancing and is currently undergoing engagement in advance of public consultation during May. The Lowlands Plan replaces the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Connecting Oxfordshire Strategies for Witney and Carterton, extending them to cover new areas, support sustainable growth and to develop a framework that reflects the shift to a people first approach. The MAP Plans outline how the vision, targets, and outcomes of the LTCP will be delivered in locations across the county. They will be used to guide future workstreams, scheme development, funding bids, responses to planning applications, securing developer contributions and will support and enable sustainable growth. The West Oxfordshire Lowlands Movement and Place Plan is pivotal to accommodating the transport and movement needs arising from planned development.

In addition to the MAP which will be a live document that is updated at regular intervals, the county is working with West Oxfordshire District Council on transport modelling work to support the emerging Local Plan. This work will identify the impacts of the proposed growth and seek to identify high level mitigation measures. This is the process for identifying the mitigation measures for the 5000 homes in the Witney area. This work is due to be completed in April and report in May, with a view to it being published along side the Local Plan 2043 Regulation 19 in June. In addition, officers will continue to assess each planning application received on its own merits and seek to secure infrastructure and service contributions and improvements that meet the

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| | <p>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Planning Obligations tests as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p> |
| <p>58. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>The recently agreed S106 agreement for the OUFC stadium in my division includes what appears to be conflicting expectations with regard to parking controls around the development and how their operation will be financed.</p> <p>Apart from sums for the setting up of a CPZ, which seems inadequate for the size of the zone proposed, there is a sum of £184,120 for “additional enforcement officers” to cover a period of between 1 and 3 years. However elsewhere in the agreement it says that existing OCC enforcement officers can patrol proposed CPZs without additional cost to the County Council.</p> <p>If OCC anticipates that there will be no additional investment in enforcement and the initial funding period is only for a maximum of 3 years, what happens after that? How can OCC officers enforce a 3km radius CPZ without additional resources when they currently struggle to enforce the existing parking restrictions in Kidlington? Isn't it highly likely that Council Tax payers will end up footing the bill on top of local</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The signed Section 106 agreement for the OUFC stadium secures (i) the design and implementation of matchday CPZ(s) around the site – initially within 2 km with scope to extend a further 1 km if monitoring shows it's needed; and (ii) £184,120 (indexed) for additional enforcement officers to provide initial, matchday-focused enforcement capacity while the CPZ beds in. These items are listed in the County Council's transport obligations that underpin the S106 legal agreement and were part of the package considered by Planning Committee.</p> <p>After that initial period, ongoing CPZ enforcement is expected to be funded from the CPZ itself (permit income and penalty charge receipts) within OCC's civil enforcement arrangements, rather than by general Council Tax; this in line with the national civil parking enforcement framework.</p> <p>In short, the S106 provides pump-priming to establish effective controls and enforcement from day one; day-to-day operation thereafter (after the pump-priming period) is intended to be cost-neutral to the taxpayer and managed within OCC's civil enforcement service. The legal agreement also builds in flexibility to extend the CPZ by a further 1 km if monitoring shows it's required, so coverage can be matched to on-the-ground conditions as they emerge.</p> |

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| <p>residents having to pay £20 a year to park outside their own homes?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>So, could the cabinet member please clarify, is the plan after three years to fund the enforcement of the CPZ by relying on people parking in the restricted zones and thus incurring fines, as well as residents being forced to pay to park outside their own homes? Does that not mean that local residents incur the double whammy of nuisance parking and the financial burden?</p> | <p>Response</p> <p>Well, the short answer is I hope not. And I absolutely share the Councillor's concern about this absolutely vital issue. Partly speaking as divisional member for the next-door division, I'll be honest, in my view, two kilometres is not enough.</p> <p>If you look at parking around major football stadiums, people are going on a day out, they'd be perfectly happy to park two kilometres and walk and I think it should be further than that and I hope it will be further than that. I wouldn't characterise the CPZ as forcing people to pay to park outside their homes.</p> <p>What it does is safeguard their own area for them to be able to park in and the cost covers the scheme of delivering that. So yeah, I absolutely look forward to working with the Councillor to make this scheme as robust as possible and hopefully to spread through the whole of the built-up area of Kiddlington and the surrounding public review sites and to the south as well into my division.</p> |
| <p>59. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>The wooded area adjacent to the site intended for the new OUFC football stadium in my division is currently under consideration by Natural England for designation as Ancient Woodland. There have also recently been reports of rare protected species in the area such as brown hairstreak butterflies.</p> <p>This area remains in the ownership of OCC but the S106 agreement hands responsibility for the woodland management plan to the District</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND TRANSFORMATION</p> <p>The Section 106 agreement for the OUFC stadium secures a Woodland Management Plan for the adjacent woodland, which remains in OCC ownership. Responsibility for preparing, implementing, and monitoring the plan sits with the developer, under the approval and enforcement of Cherwell District Council.</p> <p>The plan must operate for a minimum of 25 years from completion, with formal monitoring reports required at 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years. Any amendments to the plan must be agreed in writing with Cherwell DC.</p> <p>OCC retains landowner rights and the Woodland Management Plan is about ensuring</p> |

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| <p>Council and the developer. The period over which the plan operates is ill-defined, ranging from the duration of the development to 25 years from its completion. There's also provision for the plan to be amended and updated with no apparent reference to OCC as the landowner.</p> <p>Given that this land belongs to OCC and we gave undertakings during the proposals to lease the adjacent site to OUFC about natural habitat protection, biodiversity and Local Nature Recovery Strategies, is it appropriate that OCC, as the landowner, appears to have abdicated all responsibility for the long term maintenance and protection of this site to another authority and to the developers themselves?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>The answer says OCC is not giving up its custodianship of the woodland, yet it also says the responsibility for a woodland management plan sits with the developer and CDC. How can both those statements be true when OCC appears not to be playing any active role in that process?</p> | <p>works done on the site leased to OUFC does not damage the Woodland. It is not about granting OUFC rights to carry out work in the Woodland (it grants no such rights) nor about OCC giving up its custodianship of the Woodland (OCC is not giving that up).</p> <p>Response</p> <p>This site is no different to other sites. The obligations are set out in the answer to the question. If what Councillor Middleton is really saying is that he would like the county council to take a very active role as landowner and landlord, that is something that will be discussed with officers and indeed with him as a local member.</p> |
| <p>60. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>Part of the S106 agreement for the OUFC stadium in my division includes a S278 requirement for a minimum 3.5m wide path along the North West side of Frieze Way (A4165) along</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>The S106 agreement secures the principle of a minimum 3.5m wide shared footway/cycleway along the northwest side of Frieze Way (A4165) and a crossing at Loop Farm roundabout, to be delivered via a Section 278 (S278) agreement with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). No detailed design or construction drawings are</p> |

with a crossing over the A44 at the Loop Farm roundabout. This is proposed as the primary pedestrian route to allow fans to walk from Peartree P&R to the stadium site.

This is loosely referenced in the S106 agreement with no details about how it will be achieved. There also appears to be no reference to it on the plans. Most importantly, there are no details about how much of the established mature hedgerow along the edge of the Frieze Farm site will be removed (if any) to facilitate it.

Can the cabinet member provide more detailed information on exactly how this path will be constructed and how much further local ecological and habitat damage it will cause on top of that we are already likely to see as part of the construction of the stadium itself.

Supplementary

So, given that this footway is a vital part of the project, is it fair to say that we don't know how much damage will be done to local mature hedgerows on top of the damage already being planned by the stadium site itself? And our Highways team and ecology officers have been content to approve this integral part of the development with no idea of how it can be achieved without a significant additional ecological impact.

included at this stage.

Plans & Committee Report:

Planning documents and committee report describe the route as a key pedestrian link from Peartree Park & Ride to the stadium, but do not show a finalised alignment or construction detail. The S278 process will determine the exact design.

Hedgerow Removal & Ecology:

There is no quantified detail yet on hedgerow removal; S106 documents acknowledge that some vegetation management may be required. Ecology officers have stated that any loss must be minimised and mitigated (such as new planting or habitat creation agreed with OCC ecology team), and further ecological assessment will be required at the S278 stage.

Current Status:

The detailed S278 mitigation package, including the final design and ecological assessment, has not yet been submitted to OCC. All impacts, including any hedgerow removal, will be reviewed and mitigated as part of technical approval.

Response

Well, it's my understanding that the details of the hedgerow removal and ecology are quite clearly detailed in this answer, so I don't understand why it hasn't been sufficient for you.

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| <p>61. COUNCILLOR CHRIS BRANT</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member reassure families in my division and across the Banbury area whose children were offered secondary school places in Bicester rather than at schools in the Banbury area, that the Council is working to address this issue and ensure that, wherever possible, children can attend secondary schools closer to their communities? And can he confirm whether all affected families have now been contacted?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Thank you to Councillor Gaul for his hard work on Banbury Schools issue. Can he give a latest update on the numbers of children being reallocated places, and can he clarify why families are having to wait until May to have that confirmation?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR SEAN GAUL, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>The Council has successfully secured 30 additional places at North Oxfordshire Academy, and since Monday 2nd, 17 more places have become available at Banbury schools following parental refusals. While these developments increase overall capacity in the Banbury area, it is important to clarify that access to these places is governed by the admissions procedures and not directly linked to specific groups of children. Our engagement with Banbury schools remains ongoing as we explore further opportunities to expand capacity. We are also reaching out to colleagues across the border to identify any additional options that may benefit local families.</p> <p>To ensure all affected families are kept fully informed and supported, we have sent letters to every parent outlining the next steps. To help families who have been offered places in Bicester, we have set up a dedicated phone line for any questions or concerns. For families who have not yet responded—either to the letter or by calling the phone line—officers have proactively made direct contact to ensure everyone receives guidance and support.</p> <p>We remain committed to keeping families updated throughout this process and to ensuring children have the best possible chance to attend schools close to their communities.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>So, we initially created 30 places at North Oxfordshire Academy. A further 17 places came on stream through parental acceptances and declined soon after. This means that we have an additional 47 Banbury School places which will be going into the next admissions round that we did not have 22 days ago.</p> <p>50 out of 54 families are going into the next round of admissions who are looking to secure a Banbury School place when they were not successful the first time round. It is worth mentioning that 17 out of 54 families did not request a Banbury School place in</p> |
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| | <p>any of their choices. We are in discussions with another Banbury School and we're hopeful to unlock an additional up to 24 places. This would, if successful, give us an additional 71 Banbury School places that we did not have 22 days ago.</p> <p>The admissions process, a legal process which is causing frustration because it means that families are waiting until the 8th of May, a process that works because 96% of Oxfordshire families secured a chosen school in the first admissions round. But we do have an issue in Banbury, and I have every confidence that Banbury school children will get Banbury school places come the second admissions round because of the work of this authority today.</p> |
| <p>62. COUNCILLOR KIERON MALLON</p> <p>New figures have revealed the Council is top of the table for held Section 106 money again. Of the £269 million secured from housing developers, £154 million is for education. What is this councils plan to unlock this funding and ensure investment in our local schools.</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Of the £269m secured from housing developers, I see we have £154m for education. Could the cabinet member or any cabinet member please inform me if there is sufficient section 106 monies within the Banbury Area to provide a new</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PLACE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION</p> <p>Given the scale of housing delivery in the county, the Council holds significant reserves of s106 for extending school capacity. The nature of s106 funding means that funding for major projects such as new school builds is assembled from many sites over multiple years. Equally, new schools are only built and opened once the number of local children has reached a level to make the new school viable without reducing viability of other nearby schools. Having said that, through our s106 Improvement Programme and through reviewing our overall capital delivery, we have recognised that in some cases delivery needs to be faster with clear project specifications and delivery resource. Having looked at highway, public realm, and transport infrastructure delivery over the past year and identified opportunities and funding to unlock delivery issues, the new Assistant Director of Schools and Settings Sufficiency with the Directors of Property, and of Economy and Place, are working to review the status of school projects and plan to set out a revised delivery plan in the next financial year.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>I'm afraid that's an extremely specific question, so I'm going to have to ask the officers to come back to me on that one and give you a written answer.</p> |

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| <p>secondary school.</p> | |
| <p>63. COUNCILLOR BEKAH FLETCHER</p> <p>The recent Milton Interchange works were, overall, extremely well run, delivered collaboratively and under significant time pressure. However, once the junction reopened, one set of road markings was dangerously incorrect. The initial timeframe given for correcting this was three days, and it was only after councillor intervention that this was reduced to 48 hours. Will the Cabinet Member confirm whether a formal investigation will take place into how this error occurred, why it took direct engagement from councillors to prioritise remediation, and how the Council will demonstrate that lessons have been learned for future major works?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>I can confirm that the Head of Service is formally looking into this with Mgroup to understand how this occurred and taking measures to improve processes and how we work to minimise the likelihood of this happening again. Processes and systems are in place to try and ensure these types of errors are avoided through drawing checks, site inspections and supervision – obviously something went wrong here. I can confirm that with immediate effect additional supervision checks during works taking place and on completion are now in place with the contractor.</p> <p>Obtaining road space approval to undertake the necessary remedial work was needed from National Highways and our own Network team required negotiation to agree a shorter timeframe than the original permission given to achieve the earliest possible start date.</p> |
| <p>64. COUNCILLOR BEKAH FLETCHER</p> <p>In 2025, two significant road closures affected the Harwell, Western Valley and Blewbury division: the Grove Road closure in July–August, and the Didcot Road/Miles East closure in October–November. At the time, it was acknowledged that there were failings in the execution of both schemes, and investigations were promised into each instance, with a commitment that the relevant County Councillor</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The service has carried out a review of processes to understand what caused the issues at these works and adapted process to prevent recurrence. Officers will be in touch in April to discuss amendments made and how best local members can feed into significant works such as the closures described.</p> |

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| <p>would be involved. To date, no consultation with the Councillor has taken place. Have these investigations been delayed, and if so, what is now the expected timeframe for their completion and councillor involvement?</p> | |
| <p>65.COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES</p> <p>The Government has increased revenue fundings for the Bus Services Fund given to Local Authorities by 9% over the next three years. Can the Cabinet Member specify how the Administration will use this funding to improve bus connectivity for communities within the top three deciles of transport related social exclusion - such as Donnington, Littlemore and Greater Leys in Oxford City which have seen the 46 and 3A bus services withdrawn?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Does the cabinet member recognise, given his</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The Administration has demonstrated its commitment to the improvement of bus services across Oxfordshire through a comprehensive programme of new services, improved frequencies, and expansion of operating hours, and restoring connectivity to rural areas where services had formerly been lost.</p> <p>The increase in Bus Services Fund revenue money from Government, whilst welcomed, remains insufficient to fund all requests received, particularly when bus services exist in these areas. The communities referred to have all seen recent improvements to their services, with higher frequencies on Iffley Road and Abingdon Road, a significant increase in services to Littlemore, and provision of four buses per hour on Grenoble Road for Greater Leys. However, the improvement on Grenoble Road was not successful and the frequency has now returned to that which was in place before February 2025.</p> <p>The funding increase will be absorbed by above-inflationary cost increases and the requirements of the hugely successful MyBus Oxfordshire ticket scheme, which benefits young people (5-18) in Oxford and countywide. Discounted travel for young people has been regularly requested by local Members in the city, and this Administration is delivering on that request through unprecedented investment in fares initiatives.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>This council, of course, does that every single day through our partnership with bus</p> |

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| <p>answer, the cross-subsidy of routes enabled by bus franchising is absolutely essential in expanding access and frequency of bus services to communities affected by transport-related social exclusion?</p> | <p>operators and many, many other stakeholders. And it works. The answer refers to improved frequencies, expansion of operating hours, new routes, free park and ride, delivered through our policies, not least our commitment to reducing congestion.</p> <p>I spend a lot of my time talking to colleagues in other parts of the country. Have a look at the trade press, read what's going on. We really are doing well here. In many parts of the country, bus services are being withdrawn because of pressures, financial pressures and patronage pressures and ours are increasing.</p> <p>That is a real achievement. I absolutely hear what the Councillor says about specific areas. I would include other areas of deprivation, such as the Cutteslowe estate in my own division. I would love us to continue our progress towards delivering services in those areas and every single decision is a balance of usage and cost and balancing against other improvements that have been delivered elsewhere. The answer also refers to the My Bus scheme, which we work really hard to maintain in the face of the cost having ballooned as a direct result of two things.</p> <p>Firstly, it being extremely popular, and secondly the Labour government hiking the national bus fare cap, which meant that, in order to continue delivering good value, particularly to young people through that My Bus ticket, this council had to step in and make up that deficit that the national Labour government has handed us. That makes far more difference on a day-to-day basis than arcane debates about franchising.</p> |
| <p>66. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES</p> <p>What steps is the Cabinet Member taking to ensure effective adherence to speed limits within Oxford following the forthcoming review, including through the use of speed cameras, vehicle activated signs (VAS) and infrastructure interventions; and what conversations has he had with Thames Valley Police regarding</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The planned review of 20mph speed limits will include Oxford, together with the approximately 275 new limits elsewhere in the county under the 20mph transformation programme. It is an integral part of the Safe Speeds strand of the Vision Zero Whole System approach to road safety. The review will look at current speeds on the network and priorities for action for further speed management measures (subject to funding and consultation), including close liaison with Thames Valley Police and their own prioritisation processes for speed enforcement.</p> |

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| <p>enforcement, including potential use of average speed cameras on key routes?</p> <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Can the cabinet member outline the specific measures being considered and specific asks he's making of Thames Valley Police? Residents of Oxford need to know that tackling speeding in the city is a real priority, especially due to its impact on modal choice.</p> | <p>Response</p> <p>Short answer, yes, but not yet. Oxford is on the scheme for the 20 mile an hour limit, but it hasn't been brought forward yet for the familiar reason that Botley Road is still closed, but it will be, and that will be the time to have those discussions.</p> |
| <p>67. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm that the County Council will take all necessary steps to reinforce or replace Donnington Bridge following findings by its structural engineering team, including delivering funding and timetabling works within the shortest possible timeframe? Will the Cabinet Member also review his previous decision in 2025 to not fund a full-timetable bus service across the bridge given the ongoing disruption to local residents?</p> | <p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring Donnington Bridge remains safe and resilient for the future and recognise the disruption the current restrictions cause for residents.</p> <p>A precautionary 7.5 tonne weight restriction has been introduced whilst further detailed inspections and monitoring are being undertaken to better understand the condition of the structure, with an aim to determining the most appropriate long-term interventions.</p> <p>We will programme any necessary works as soon as we are able to do so in line with the engineering evidence.</p> <p>The County Council has no current plans to expand the provision of the minibus services over Donnington Bridge, as the existing service is provided at reasonable cost using vehicles and drivers available in the off-peak period between other commitments. The cost of providing additional services covering school and peak times would unfortunately be prohibitive.</p> <p>Alternative services are available within a ten-minute walk on both sides of Donnington Bridge, and those wishing to travel between points across the bridge are able to</p> |

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| <p>Supplementary</p> <p>Does the cabinet member acknowledge that walking the full length of Donington Bridge Road or Cornwallis and <u>Littlehay</u> Road is prohibitive for many people with limited mobility who rely on bus connections to get around and thus can he understand the hurt of being told to just do so.</p> | <p>change buses easily in the city centre – for example at Queen’s Lane where interchange between services is straightforward.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Well, I don't think anybody has told people to do that. We have put in place a minibus service to deal with a specific safety and engineering recommendation. I'm sure nobody in this council would want me to seek to overrule a recommendation made on grounds of safety that wouldn't be responsible.</p> <p>And in terms of fixing the bridge “can the cabinet member confirm that the Council will take all necessary steps to reinforce or replace Donington Bridge?” Goodness, I hope nobody would expect me to make that commitment standing here now. There are serious issues with infrastructure of that kind of age reaching the end of its working life. They are massive challenges.</p> |
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