

CABINET – 16 JUNE 2026

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received. Should any questioner not have received an answer in that time, a written answer will be provided.

1. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY	COUNCILLOR GARETH EPPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT
<p><u>Item 7: Reports from Scrutiny Committees</u></p> <p>Congratulations on your new role.</p> <p>The Scrutiny recommendation about School Streets was that <i>“That the Council should accelerate engagement with independent schools to reduce traffic impacts associated with school travel.”</i></p> <p>My division has seven private schools, with three close to one another in the same block of streets on six separate sites. At first sight it would seem simple to institute a School Streets scheme for that block, covering all these schools, but how would the</p>	<p>At the request of former Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Cllr Andrew Gant, the OCC School Engagement Team has been engaging with independent schools across Oxford City to reduce peak-time school travel congestion and encourage active and sustainable travel. This work has focused particularly on Summertown, where several independent schools are located close together.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dragon School2. Oxford High Pre/Prep3. Oxford High Senior4. Wychwood5. Summerfields <p>A summary of engagement with Summertown independent schools during this academic year is set out below.</p> <p><u>Wychwood School</u></p> <p>The team contacted Wychwood School several times in November about the potential use of park and ride sites for pupil pick-up and drop-off by school minibus. No response was received.</p>

Cabinet propose to manage the very sizeable spillover that is inevitable onto streets nearby, knowing that some spillover already occurs? Would a very large School Streets area be proposed?

Oxford High Pre and Prep School

In May 2026, the OCC School Engagement Officer met with the headteacher and senior leadership team. The school is required to produce a Modeshift STARS school travel plan as part of a recent planning application to bring the pre-prep and prep schools together on one site. The headteacher explained that the school is already working with parents to promote active travel and is keen to develop the travel plan further in the new academic year. She also expressed interest in joining Living Streets' WOW Walk to School Challenge to encourage more pupils to walk to school or use park and stride.

Oxford High Senior School

Oxford High Senior School has promoted cycling through parent-funded Dr Bike sessions and has asked whether OCC could fund future sessions. The OCC School Engagement Officer advised that funded sessions would be available if the school developed its Modeshift STARS school travel plan. However, the school is not currently engaging with OCC on this work.

The Dragon School

In February, the School Engagement Officer and Behaviour Change and Travel Plan Team Leader met with The Dragon School's Chief Operating Officer to observe the school's informal 'kiss and drop' one-way system, where parents drop off on Bardwell Road, outside the entrance to the school. The supervised drop-off point was introduced to reduce congestion at the school entrance during peak times. Parents are encouraged to use the staff-supervised one-way route, and observations suggest it is helping to reduce congestion and vehicle turning in the road. The school was interested in further active travel support from OCC, including the project to help private schools use Oxford City Park and Ride sites. The school has already contacted Monna Puna and Gavin Belcher, who are leading this work.

The Operations Manager has also been discussing dedicated school bus provision with Oxford High's Director of Finance and Operations. They are

	<p>exploring options to optimise and expand routes for pupils at The Dragon School and Oxford High, helping more pupils use dedicated school buses and reducing car journeys to and from school.</p> <p>The OCC School Engagement Team has previously explored the possibility of a School Street around The Dragon School and Oxford High Senior School. Mark Gregory noted that some Dragon School parents had strongly opposed and campaigned against the proposal. OCC’s policy is to work closely with schools when implementing School Streets, in line with Active Travel England and Department for Transport guidance.</p> <p>OCC has given the Dragon School and Christ Church Cathedral School permission to use Oxford Parkway and Thornhill Park and Ride for their AM pupil pick up and PM drop off. Along with the park and ride access, permission to use the bus lanes and gates has also been granted for their minibuses. OCC has also engaged with other independent schools in Oxford to offer this opportunity. This is ongoing and we hope that other schools take up this opportunity.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR JAMES FRY</p> <p><u>Item 13: Forward Plan & Future Business</u></p> <p>The Forward Plan includes “<i>Proposed Changes to the MyBus Ticketing Scheme</i>”. One of the initiatives that has proven successful in speeding up buses and simplifying travel in cities like London has been the requirement that all journeys are tap on-tap off.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR GARETH EPPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT</p> <p>The Council recognises that tap-on tap-off (TOTO) technology can play a significant part in speeding up boarding times – although in London the presence of a flat fare for bus journeys means there is no requirement to tap off, which can otherwise be a source of delay at busy stops.</p> <p>Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel already have TOTO capability on their buses in Oxfordshire, but other operators do not.</p> <p>The Council has recently launched its Vehicle Improvement Fund (VIF) competition and is encouraging these operators to bid for TOTO technology as part of this. We also expect that forthcoming discussions regarding the Enhanced</p>

<p>Will the Cabinet use the opportunities offered by the new Enhanced Partnership-Plus agreement with bus companies to make all journeys tap on-tap off to help to achieve the faster bus times that are the major objective of Congestion Charging? When could this be implemented?</p>	<p>Partnership Plus will include initiatives such as fare capping and simpler ticket ranges, although this remains subject to more detailed negotiations with operators. Improvements to public transport ticketing are a key part of the Council’s Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Timescales will depend on the VIF bids received from operators, but we would expect significant progress to have been made by April 2028.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS</p> <p><u>Item 11: Business Management & Monitoring Report – Performance and Risk Quarter 4 2025-26 and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2025-26</u></p> <p>The County Council’s strategic risk register shows that local government reform is considered a high risk with a probable catastrophic outcome. The report advises that work is being undertaken to ‘facilitate an improvement to identifying mitigation and risk management of all strategic risks’.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member set out the measures to mitigate and</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND TRANSFORMATION</p> <p>The measures being set out are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reprioritisation of resources across all services in which to engage with local government reorganisation activity and undertake internal scenario planning based on all eventualities; • Working collaboratively with all councils across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire to plan and deliver LGR in strong partnership; • Establishment and continued operation of a dedicated LGR team to plan for LGR in an outcome agnostic way; • Securing advice from MHCLG, other government departments, our sector advisor Theresa Grant OBE and colleagues across the local government family who have undertaken LGR to aid our internal planning;

<p>reduce the risks anticipated as a result of local government reform?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all services are maintaining appropriate risk registers to assess and treat the risks associated with planning for and ultimately delivering LGR; • Continued advocacy for a single unitary authority for Oxfordshire in order significantly to reduce the risks associated with upper tier, high complex and high demand services. <p>We have been led to expect an indication of the proposed shape of new unitary authority/authorities in July, and once we have that it will be easier to plan for how to ensure continued services across the county. Until that point, much will remain unclear, but each of the councils across the area are working well together to plan what they can at this stage.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES</p> <p><u>Item 12: Capital Outturn Report 2025-26</u></p> <p>With reference to the Capital Outturn Report 2025/26, can the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation outline the total and project by project costs of the decision to delay completion of scores of projects within the Capital Programme. Will the current Capital Programme remain financially deliverable given the additional costs of such delays?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND TRANSFORMATION</p> <p>The Capital Programme is delivered across a complex and diverse portfolio of schemes, many of which are influenced by external dependencies and evolving delivery conditions. The Council does not deliberately delay schemes without cause and endeavours to deliver projects on time or early when it can. For instance, the Shores Green junction on the A40 is ahead of schedule and will open imminently. Where delivery timelines change, this is typically driven by factors such as reliance on development activity, inherent scheme complexity, or the need to review scope and pricing to maintain value for money and ensure alignment with approved budgets.</p> <p>In some instances, projects may be paused or rephased in response to market conditions, for example where tendered costs exceed initial expectations. In these circumstances, schemes are refined, de-risked or re-scoped prior to progression, supporting improved affordability and stronger long-term outcomes. While delays can give rise to cost pressures - particularly through inflation in construction and</p>

materials- these risks are actively managed through robust programme oversight and mitigation measures. The Council is also taking a proactive approach to managing the impacts of global instability, recognising the associated risks to supply chains and material costs.

It is also important to distinguish between in-year financial slippage and overall programme performance. Variances within a single financial year often reflect the timing of expenditure rather than underlying delays to delivery. Many schemes continue to progress on site and remain within approved budgets, even where spend has shifted across financial years.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Capital Programme is not financially deliverable. The programme continues to be managed within its approved funding envelope, with no significant cost escalations requiring Cabinet approval identified during the most recent reporting period. Having said that, there have been some significant cost increases over the last couple of years, including HIF1 and the additional budget allocated to Watlington Relief Road through the budget setting processes.

Recent Cabinet approvals have included targeted cost adjustments across the programme (£1.4m A34 Lodge Hill, £1.8m Access to Witney, £2.5m A4130 Steventon Lights), reflecting the realities of delivering complex schemes in an inflationary environment.

Extended delivery timeframes - often driven by external factors - inevitably increase exposure to cost pressures. While not the sole driver, inflation remains a significant contributor. Importantly, these increases demonstrate that schemes are being actively managed, with issues transparently escalated through governance where necessary, following mitigation at programme level where possible.

	<p>As set out in Cabinet reporting, the current capital programme is over-programmed by £10.4m. The Council is actively working to reduce this position ahead of Local Government Reorganisation, ensuring the programme remains balanced and that any required options are considered through the 2027/28 budget process.</p> <p>The Council does recognise that there are further opportunities to strengthen delivery certainty, transparency and realism across the programme. This means ensuring that scheme timelines and prioritisation are aligned with available capacity and funding, reducing future exposure to cost and delivery pressures. Alongside recent improvements to governance and reporting, a further programme of work is currently being undertaken to drive continued improvement in these areas, which will include enhancing external programme-level reporting, improving visibility of scheme progress beyond in-year financial metrics, and continuing to embed strong project and programme management practices across the portfolio from the earliest stages of project development. This is particularly important for complex or inherited schemes, where early assumptions on scope, cost, inflation and deliverability may need to be revisited to ensure they remain robust and realistic.</p> <p>Overall, the programme continues to respond proactively, with robust oversight ensuring cost pressures are identified, managed and controlled appropriately.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES</p> <p><u>Item 11: Business Management & Monitoring Report – Performance and Risk Quarter 4 2025-26 and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2025-26</u></p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR</p> <p>Oxfordshire has approximately 147,000 drainage assets that fall under this remit, these being Gullies, Catchpits and Kerb Outlets, these do not include Footway channels, longitudinal kerb drainage (known as Beany Blocks)</p> <p>The network is now prioritised based on risk:</p>

To ask the Cabinet Member for Highways Construction and Repair, with reference to the overspend on fixing drainage defects identified in Point 50 of Annex D of the Business Management & Monitoring Report March 2026, what are the anticipated impacts (including financial) of delays to identifying and fixing drainage defects following the Administration's decision to move to inspections and clearance every two years rather than every year. Will this increase localised flood risks or risk greater deterioration of drainage assets?

- Annual cleansing:
 - High-speed roads (A roads / strategic network)
 - Locations linked to Section 19 flood investigations
 - Known flooding hotspots and high-risk areas
- Two-year cycle:
 - Approximately 50% of the remaining network
 - Typical parish and local road networks fall into this category

In practical terms, around 110,000 (75%) of gullies will be cleaned each year.

In the recent budget we also increased the capital funding for carrying out works to address issues found on the full annual cleanse, based on what we found during the full cycle of cleansing carried out last year . This will increase the overall spend on drainage and focus on improvement on problem areas.