

County Council

13 December 2022

Agenda

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or email committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

To: Members of the County COUNCIL

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 13 December 2022 at 10.30 am

Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on the link shown on the website. Please note, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.



Stephen Chandler
Interim Chief Executive

December 2022

Committee Officer: **Chris Reynolds**
Tel: 07542 029441; E-Mail: chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, notice is given that the meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is to provide an *aide-memoire* to assist the clerk of the meeting in the drafting of minutes.

Members are asked to sign the attendance book which will be available in the corridor outside the Council Chamber. A list of members present at the meeting will be compiled from this book.

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2022 (**CC1**) and to receive information arising from them.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note

Members are reminded that they must declare their interests orally at the meeting and specify (a) the nature of the interest and (b) which items on the agenda are the relevant items. This applies also to items where members have interests by virtue of their membership of a district council in Oxfordshire.

4. Official Communications

5. Appointments

To make any changes to the membership of the Cabinet, scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups.

6. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection. To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on Wednesday 7 December 2022. Requests to speak should be sent to chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

7. Questions with Notice from Members of the Public

8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

9. Appointment of Chief Executive and designation as Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer (Pages 17 - 20)

Report by Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

The Council is RECOMMENDED to approve

- 1.1 **The appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service position to Dr Martin Reeves with a start date to be confirmed.**
- 1.2 **A spot salary designation of £225,000 following a process of external benchmarking. The County Council pay policy should be amended to reflect this.**
- 1.3 **The designation of Dr Martin Reeves as Returning Officer for all elections with effect from the post holder commencing their role.**

10. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 21 - 24)

Report of the Cabinet meetings of 15 and 29 November 2022

11. Electoral Review: Council Size

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

12. Review of Council Governance Arrangements (Pages 25 - 32)

Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Council debated and agreed the following motion on 1 November 2022:

‘This Council has considered a change of Governance in the past from Leader and Cabinet to having a more inclusive Committee structure. The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance wishes to review the decision-making structures of the County Council, with the aim of operating in a much more inclusive way that can involve all the talents of the Council.

The Council now requests the Director of Law and Governance to institute a Full Governance Review of the County Council as soon as practicable, with any recommended changes to the Council's Executive and Governance structure to be decided by Full Council and fully implemented by May 2024”

The Council is RECOMMENDED

- a) **To undertake a review of the Council's governance arrangements as proposed in Annex 1.**
- b) **To establish a ‘Future Council Governance Working Group’ comprising a minimum of 9 members (4 Liberal Democrat Green Alliance, 3 Conservative Independent Alliance and 2 Labour & Cooperative Party) that reports to the Audit and Governance Committee which will make any recommendations to Council.**

c) To request Group Leaders to nominate members to the working group

MOTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS WITH NOTICE MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE PROPER OFFICER IN WRITING BY 9.00 AM ON THE FRIDAY BEFORE THE MEETING

13. Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves

This Council acknowledges the difficulties experienced by certain parents and students in the delivery of its SEND service and pays tribute to the testimonies of parents heard at Full Council on 1 November 2022.

This Council places on public record the importance of delivering timely assessments, reviews and information-sharing to parents and resolves to improve its service delivery and working practices as soon as reasonably practicable.

This Council resolves to recommend the Cabinet to include as wide a range of consultees as possible in drawing up such improvement plans which may include a politically proportionate, cross-party advisory group of Councillors, together with parent-guardian delegates with direct experience of the Council's SEND service.

To ensure that this matter is kept front of mind, Council resolves to ask, via the Chairman of the People Overview and scrutiny committee, that said committee make it a priority of the utmost importance and urgency to place this as standing item on the agenda.

14. Motion by Councillor Damian Haywood

Banbury is working currently towards joining the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities led by a partnership group coordinated by Age UK Oxfordshire. This council looks to support this initiative through the following actions:

Promote positive images of ageing in all of our communications to tackle the narrative around ageing. We call on people, services and partners to recognise the need to change both the language and images used when talking about (and with) older people.

Support ongoing activity to raise awareness of the benefits of older workers, encouraging employers to change their approaches to recruiting, reskilling and retaining older employees. Council further supports the need for innovative and radically new ideas and options to support people aged 50-64 who are out of work, to enable them to age well, live well and improve their overall quality of life.

Champion more age-friendly activity and infrastructure in our neighbourhoods, so more

older residents can age well in their local communities, with access to the right services, housing, information, infrastructure and opportunities - social, cultural or economic. The voice of older people must be heard to ensure that they continue to contribute to and take a leading role where they live.

We ask that these actions are referred to Cabinet for implementation

15. Motion by Councillor Sally Povolotsky

Council notes that:

1. Thames Water discharged raw sewage into Oxfordshire rivers 5,028 times in 2021. All 10 Oxon based works discharged into the rivers in 2021;
2. Calculations indicate Oxford and Witney treatment works can only cope with 62% of the capacity need, and in Banbury for just 49% of requirements;
3. Discharges have become routine, rather than emergency response to exceptional conditions.

This council believes that:

1. The rules on sewage discharges must be tightened and enforcement improved, in conjunction with the Environment Agency;
2. The Government must make capital funding urgently available to address these issues;
3. Solutions cannot be local, as sewage output in one geographic area affects other areas.

Council recommends the Cabinet:

1. the Leader to write to Rt Hon Therese Coffey MP, requesting an acceleration in the capital programme to lower risks of untreated sewage discharges into our rivers, and an assurance that housing developers will be expected to fund water infrastructure to meet needs of new housing;
2. the Leader and Chief Executive to work with other local authorities to call on the Government to provide guidance and funding to local planning authorities to challenge water companies to deliver the urgent upgrades required to water treatment capacity.

Council resolves:

- to set up a county-wide water resilience working group that will develop appropriate policy to guide planning application determination and enforcement in areas where sewage treatment is insufficient, policy which incorporates legislation, integration, prevention, rectification at source, and the polluter pays principle.

16. Motion by Councillor Michael Waine

This Council welcomes the changes to its scrutiny function generally and the creation of dedicated People, Place and Performance & Corporate Services committees offering more targeted scrutiny of specific workstreams.

Notwithstanding the successes of the People committee in providing effective scrutiny of the very significant challenges facing Adult Social Care and Children's Services, Education and Schools issues have, at times, appeared to be marginalised.

Accordingly, Council resolves to ask Audit & Governance to consider the question of whether the Education Scrutiny Committee should be re-established as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function in any governance review so as to ensure that Education policy issues can be more fully addressed by members on a deliberative and cross-party basis.

17. Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves

This Council notes with concern that highways and transport spend now accounts for only 8% of its revenue spend.

Given the comparatively small expenditure on keeping our roads safe and in good repair, it is vital that the Council's service is properly staffed and that such staff strike a reasonable balance between the needs of our City, towns and parishes.

In certain areas of its highways service, this Council acknowledges that there are significant staffing challenges in the timely provision of Traffic Regulation Orders, in particular, and in dealing with the needs of our rural communities in general.

This Council recommends the Cabinet to commission a report into the staffing, recruitment and retention challenges facing its highways service for consideration by Cabinet as soon as practicable, with a response published by Cabinet and made available to members no later than its meeting on 28 March 2023.

Schedule of Business

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 1 November 2022 commencing at 10.30 am and finishing at 3.40 pm

Present:

Councillor Susanna Pressel – in the Chair

Councillors:

Felix Bloomfield	Andy Graham	Glynis Phillips
Brad Baines	Kate Gregory	Sally Povolotsky
David Bartholomew	Jane Hanna OBE	Eddie Reeves
Tim Bearder	Jenny Hannaby	G.A. Reynolds
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Damian Haywood	Judy Roberts
Nigel Champken-Woods	Charlie Hicks	Alison Rooke
Mark Cherry	John Howson	David Rouane
Andrew Coles	Tony Ilott	Geoff Saul
Yvonne Constance OBE	Bob Johnston	Les Sibley
Imade Edosomwan	Liz Leffman	Nigel Simpson
Duncan Enright	Nick Leverton	Roz Smith
Mohamed Fadlalla	Dan Levy	Ian Snowdon
Arash Fatemian	Dr Nathan Ley	Dr Pete Sudbury
Neil Fawcett	Kieron Mallon	Bethia Thomas
Ted Fenton	Ian Middleton	Michael Waine
Nick Field-Johnson	Freddie van Mierlo	Liam Walker
Donna Ford	Calum Miller	Richard Webber
Andrew Gant	Jane Murphy	
Stefan Gawrysiak	Michael O'Connor	

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.

81/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2022 were amended as follows:-

Item 9 - Report of the Cabinet

In relation to a question from Cllr Liam Walker, Cllr Calum Miller explained the reasons why the programme for LED street lighting has been delayed but he had been assured that it would be completed in the current financial year

In relation to a question from Cllr Liam Walker, Cllr Andrew Gant undertook to inform Cllr Walker of where the advertisement of the traffic regulation order for the Cowley LTN had been published

and agreed as a correct record.

82/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ash, Banfield, Bennett, Bulmer, Corkin, Lygo, Thomas and Paule.

83/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Middleton declared an interest in item 17 – Motion by Councillor Nigel Simpson – as a resident of Yarnton, withdrew from the meeting during the discussion and did not vote thereon.

84/22 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chair reported on her recent and forthcoming engagements including visits to thank volunteers in various divisions across the County, the Civic Supper, the Farm visit on 4th November and Christmas carols on 6 December.

85/22 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

Council noted the following appointment:-

Councillor Walker to replace Councillor Corkin on People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

86/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

Petitions

7 petitions on issues concerning children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) had been received. The Chair had agreed for 3 speakers to address the Council.

Mary Totman, Olivia Johnson and Ross Kuklinski were invited to address the Council.

Mary Totman referred to what she considered to be systemic failings and discrimination in assessing the needs of vulnerable children. Ms Totman

accused the Council of failing to accept the recommendations in professional reports which had resulted in the development of poor quality education and health care plans. Ms Totman considered that the authority was prone to “cherry picking evidence” with a view to saving costs and that, as a result, many children were receiving inadequate educational provision. She refuted the suggestion that all of these problems were the result of national issues and that the County Council’s policies were a contributory factor.

Olivia Johnson considered that there had been a complete breakdown of communication between the Council and parents of children provided with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) which did not reflect their needs. In her view, it was not the case that all children could be adequately supported in the mainstream educational system. She said that the authority was wasting money on defending its case in tribunals and the failures of the SEND system had an impact on families, their finances and mental health. She said that every child had a right to an education through which they could thrive and requested that the Council replaced its adversarial practices with collaboration with parents. She requested that the Council adhered to legal timescales and provided services that worked for all children.

Ross Kuklinski said that the County Council had refused to adhere to court orders and communicate with parents in dealing with SEND cases. He referred to the case of his daughter where delaying tactics on the part of the authority and refusal to discuss her proposed EOTAS package had a severe impact on her education and welfare. He criticised the Council for resorting to legal representation at considerable cost in preference to adopting improved communication policies and practices which would enable better services to be provided to children and their parents.

Public Address

Paul Roberts, CEO of Aspire Oxfordshire, referred to the impact of the cost of living crisis on the work of front line charities. Increased demand for services and assistance had placed huge demands on those working on the third sector and he considered that the effect of the economic situation on vulnerable communities in Oxfordshire would be greater than the COVID pandemic. He encouraged the Council to continue to work in collaboration with charities to help build an inclusive economy in the County.

Jamie Clark addressed the Council on the success of the School Streets scheme introduced by the Council. He expressed concern that the ANPR cameras and associated permit schemes had not yet been implemented and the scheme was relying on the good will of volunteers. He asked that the Council publish a timetable for the cameras and permit parking schemes and consider a budget for employing wardens to replace volunteers.

Zahura Plummer spoke in opposition to the motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves (Item 15). She referred to the considerable benefits of the LTNs on

the lives of families living in areas benefitting from the schemes. There had been a considerable reduction in traffic transporting children to schools in these areas. Children were being encouraged to cycle to school along safer streets and families were saving money on fuel costs. The schemes needed to be supported by traffic filters to ensure a co-ordinated approach to traffic controls within Oxford.

Danny Yee addressed the Council in opposition to the motion by Councillor Reeves. He referred to the importance and benefits of a sustainable transport system, particularly for children attending school and older people needing to access services. The introduction of LTNs had resulted in a considerable reduction in traffic, promoting safer neighbourhoods and were a cost effective method of supporting the objectives of the Central Oxfordshire Traffic Plan (COTP).

Richard Parnham spoke in support of Councillor Reeves motion. He considered that there had been inadequate sampling and diligence in the data collection for traffic volumes and air quality following the introduction of the LTNs in East Oxford. The data evidence had not been comprehensive and had not provided adequate evidence in support of the schemes. He suggested that improvements were needed in data collection for future LTN and traffic filter schemes.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Council that she was not aware of any evidence of inadequate or incorrect collection of data in relation to traffic schemes.

Robin Tucker, co-chair of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Healthy Travel, addressed the Council. He referred to a wide range of statistics and survey results demonstrating demonstrating the climate and health-related benefits of LTNs in Oxfordshire. He also expressed concern about criminal activity including vandalism of the traffic control measures.

Nick Welch, Chair Divinity Road Area Residents' Association, addressed the Council, referred to support from the LTNs in his area and the need for the scheme to be properly evaluated. The acts of vandalism of the traffic control measures are causing considerable disruption to the schemes. The Residents' Association fully supported the Council's actions in monitoring and evaluating the schemes going forward.

87/22 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 7)

Ms Aodhin MacBride had given written notice of the following question to Councillor Duncan Enright

To what extent has the provision of early years educational settings (nurseries) been considered in the design of the Marston Ferry road traffic filter?

There are no nurseries in New Marston, so like many other parents of young working families in this area, we are required to send our children to nursery in Summertown. Our daughter is too young to be transported on a bike and so we have to travel by car. Implementing the traffic filter will force us to make a very large detour via the ringroad (with greater co2 emissions). The proposed additional bus route from Summertown to the JR does not solve this issue as it doesn't actually go into New Marston.

Councillor Enright replied:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been developed by Steer, an independent transport consultancy, which was informed through direct engagement with Oxford City Council's Transport and Movement focus group. An EqIA is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic. A summary of the EqIA can be found on our Let's Talk Oxfordshire consultation webpage: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/traffic-filters-2022>.

The EqIA identified that the Traffic Filters may inconvenience some drivers and those who rely on cars, which may include some parents/carers with children at nurseries and primary schools. To mitigate the impact on these people, the EqIA recommended a series of permits and exemptions from the Traffic Filters. These mitigation measures were developed to strike the balance between lessening the negative impacts of the Traffic Filters without overly diluting the wider benefits of the scheme.

A series of additional mitigation measures are also outlined within the EqIA, which range from implementing bus priority and service improvements to maximise the benefits of the filters, to accelerating Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes to enable more people to switch from driving to cycling or walking. Oxfordshire County Council, in partnership with Oxford City Council, intend to deliver these mitigation measures following the implementation of the Traffic Filters scheme.

In the case of New Marston, quite a large area will be within 5 minutes' walk of the improved bus route (Marston Ferry Road, Cherwell Drive and Headley Way) that would enable residents to get to Summertown without having to take a detour via the Ring Road. So in reality this may well be an option for quite a number of people in this area.

We would encourage people to complete the questionnaire survey on our [consultation website](#) to give us their views on the proposals for trial traffic filters.

Mr Richard Parnham had given written notice of the following question to Councillor Andrew Gant:

Can Councillor Grant explain why the TRO orders, purporting to make the Cowley LTNs permanent on 22 August 2022, did not appear on <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>, the location specified in the order's official public notice, until 12 October 2022, a full seven weeks after we might reasonably have expected to see these TRO orders published on this specific website?

Councillor Gant replied:

This was an omission which was rectified as soon as it was brought to our attention. The public notices of the orders were published in the Oxford Times in accordance with the relevant regulations (Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996) and the subsequent omission from the Let's Talk website did not affect the legal status of the retention of the measures on the ground. However, officers have reviewed their processes to ensure that such an omission cannot happen again.

In reply to a supplementary question, Cllr Gant undertook to provide a written response detailing the procedures for advertising the Cowley LTN traffic regulation order and the communications with consultees.

Mr Peter West had given notice of the following question to Councillor Andrew Gant:

Can Councillor Gant explain why the online public notice, announcing that the Cowley LTNs had been made permanent, were added onto the bottom of a completely unrelated draft traffic order regarding speed restrictions close to the East Oxfordshire village of Great Milton – thereby rendering the online notice invisible to anyone searching on the online public notices section of the Oxford Mail for the Cowley LTN notice within three miles of Cowley, the correct location to where the notice should have been geographically tagged to?

Councillor Gant replied:

The online versions of notices are uploaded through a central portal. Unlike the hard copy version we do not have control over the final format. The online version is different from the hard copy as it does not show a division between the notices. As the Great Milton and Cowley LTN notices were submitted at the same time this meant that they appeared together in the online version. I note the issue regarding tagging and have asked officers to explore what might be done to address this.

In reply to a supplementary question, Cllr Gant said that he was entirely satisfied that the Council had complied with all the legal requirements regarding the Cowley LTNs.

88/22 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(Agenda Item 8)

15 questions with Notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and supplementary questions and answers will be set out in the Annex to the minutes.

In relation to question 6 (Councillor Brad Baines to Councillor Andrew Gant) Councillor Gant undertook to provide a written response on the Council's objectives for providing level 2 Bikeability training.

In relation to question 11 (Councillor Liam Walker to Councillor Andrew Gant) Councillor Gant undertook to provide information on the monitoring by the Highways Department of new 20mph schemes.

89/22 REPORT OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 9)

Council received the report of the Cabinet.

In relation to a question from Cllr Charlie Hicks, Cllr Calum Miller undertook to ensure that the KPI statistics contained in the Business Management & Monitoring report were presented to Scrutiny Committees on a routine basis.

In relation to a question from Cllr Brad Baines, Cllr Calum Miller undertook to explore, with District Council and other agency partners, possible options for enhancing support for key workers employed by the Council including housing costs.

In relation to a question from Cllr Yvonne Constance, Cllr Duncan Enright undertook to provide a written response on the process for consulting town and parish councils on the "Decide and Provide" requirements for Transport Assessments.

90/22 DISPENSATION FROM ATTENDING MEETINGS

(Agenda Item 10)

With the consent of Council, this report was withdrawn.

91/22 OFFICER SCHEME OF DELEGATION

(Agenda Item 11)

Council had before it a report by the Monitoring Officer setting out the Officer Scheme of Delegation within the Constitution as it related to Council functions. This was required to be agreed annually.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Susanna Pressel, seconded by Councillor Felix Bloomfield, and carried nem con) to approve the Scheme of Delegation as it relates to Council functions and the amendments to the parts of the Council's Constitution annexed to this report (which include a revised Officer Scheme of Delegation) where these are not already within the delegations granted to the Director of Law and Governance.

92/22 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023/24

(Agenda Item 12)

Council had before it the schedule of meeting dates proposed for the 2022/23 Council Year. The Schedule had been drawn up to reflect the various rules about frequency of meetings set out in the Council's Constitution and took into account Bank Holidays and the summer period when meetings were traditionally avoided as far as practicable.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Susanna Pressel, seconded by Councillor Felix Bloomfield, and carried nem con) to approve the calendar of meetings for the 2023-24 civic year attached to the report.

93/22 CAPITAL GOVERNANCE - AMENDMENTS TO THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, SECTION 5, CAPITAL

(Agenda Item 13)

Council had before it a report setting out proposed amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules following a review of the Council's Capital Governance framework, processes and structures. The amendments were considered and endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2022.

RESOLVED: (on a motion from Councillor Roz Smith, seconded by Councillor Brad Baines, and carried nem con) to approve the amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules (Financial Regulations, Section 5 "Capital") as set out in Annex 1 to the report, as recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee.

94/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ROZ SMITH

(Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Roz Smith moved and Councillor Geoff Saul seconded the following motion:

This Council notes:

There are over 2 million employees providing unpaid care to friends and family members, such as personal care, medical and social support, and attending appointments.

The pressure on people as they balance their work with caring is hard. This Council believes that more action is needed to support people in employment with caring responsibilities.

Council therefore proposes to support the Carer's Leave Bill being brought to Parliament which will, for the first time, create a statutory entitlement for employers to offer unpaid leave for employees with caring responsibilities.

The Bill is expected to provide for up to one week's unpaid leave per year (in addition to paid leave allowance) and would provide more flexibility for carers, making things easier for them and their employers.

Eligibility for the leave would be clearly defined in the Bill, taking a broad approach to reflect the wide range of caring relationships and responsibilities.

Council therefore:

1. resolves for the leader to write to all Oxfordshire MP's asking them if they will support the Carer's Leave Bill
2. resolves to ask the Cabinet to commission a review of the communications and support for local advice services for employed Careers residing in Oxfordshire to ascertain if there is any further support that can be given

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

This Council notes:

There are over 2 million employees providing unpaid care to friends and family members, such as personal care, medical and social support, and attending appointments.

The pressure on people as they balance their work with caring is hard. This Council believes that more action is needed to support people in employment with caring responsibilities.

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1. resolves for the leader to write to all Oxfordshire MP's asking them if they will support the Carer's Leave Bill
2. resolves to ask the Cabinet to commission a review of the communications and support for local advice services for employed Careers residing in Oxfordshire to ascertain if there is any further support that can be given.

95/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Eddie Reeves moved and Councillor Yvonne Constance seconded the following motion:

This Council notes that significant concerns have been raised locally and nationally surrounding the data sets used to justify the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs).

This Council further acknowledges its shortcomings in connection with certain of the LTN consultations and restates its commitment to consult more fully with local businesses, community groups and residents with mobility and/or religious requirements that make LTNs in parts of Oxford more problematic than in others.

Without prejudice to the administration's aim of reducing car-use, this Council recommends to Cabinet that it halt any immediate expansion in LTNs with a view to reassuring residents surrounding the data-sets and consultation methodologies used to justify and aid their introduction.

This Council further recommends to Cabinet that an independent audit of LTNs introduced in, or planned for, Oxfordshire be set in train to allow the Local Government Association or such other organisation to impartially assess their value in economic and environmental terms, together with their corresponding levels of democratic support.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 35 votes to 19 with no abstentions.

96/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS

(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Charlie Hicks moved and Councillor Judy Roberts seconded the following motion:

This Council has considered a change of Governance in the past from Leader and Cabinet to having a more inclusive Committee

structure. The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance wishes to review the decision-making structures of the County Council, with the aim of operating in a much more inclusive way that can involve all the talents of the council.

The Council now requests the Director for Law & Governance to institute a Full Governance Review of the County Council as soon as practicable, with any recommended changes to the Council's Executive and Governance structure to be decided by Full Council and fully implemented by May 2024.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and carried by 36 votes to 16 with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: (by 36 votes to 16)

This Council has considered a change of Governance in the past from Leader and Cabinet to having a more inclusive Committee structure. The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance wishes to review the decision-making structures of the County Council, with the aim of operating in a much more inclusive way that can involve all the talents of the council.

The Council now requests the Director for Law & Governance to institute a Full Governance Review of the County Council as soon as practicable, with any recommended changes to the Council's Executive and Governance structure to be decided by Full Council and fully implemented by May 2024.

97/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR NIGEL SIMPSON

(Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Nigel Simpson moved and Councillor Liam Walker seconded the following motion:

Oxfordshire County Council has acknowledged the Climate Change Emergency.

A major contributor to excessive CO2 output is unnecessary car journeys. The proposal by Network Rail to shut the vital link between Yarnton and Kidlington by closing the level crossing at Sandy Lane will result in a significant increase in carbon emissions.

Permanent closure would see drivers forced to use alternative routes resulting in an average extra distance travelled of nearly two miles per journey.

Based on a recent survey undertaken by Yarnton Parish Council and on current usage this is estimated to result in an extra 4750 miles travelled on weekdays and 3800 at weekends, resulting in 1.5 million unnecessary miles per year.

The cost of such surplus miles is hundreds of thousands of pounds to residents and businesses who rely on their cars; and extra pollution in the form of many tonnes of carbon emissions, contrary to the Council's environmental objectives.

This would go directly against the Council's ambition to reduce CO2 output generated by transport and very significantly degrade the network of contacts that currently underpins the ancient and vital community nexus around the parishes of Yarnton, Begbroke and Kidlington.

This Council calls upon the Leader to request relevant Cabinet colleague(s) to engage with the local parishes, Network Rail and Oxford University Developments to discuss with them the ways in which this vital link can be maintained at least cost to the environment and for the benefit of all users with improvements, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 32 votes to 19 with 1 abstention.

98/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

(Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Eddie Reeves moved and Councillor Liam Walker seconded the following motion:

Given the scale of the cost-of-living crisis, this Council resolves to show a lead by recommending to Cabinet that catering for meetings of Full Council and at civic functions be cancelled unless catering is considered essential.

Where appropriate, this Council further recommends to Cabinet that it commit to reallocating such monies to helping those residents in greatest need.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was lost by 36 votes to 18 with no abstentions.

99/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY

(Agenda Item 19)

Councillor Sally Povolotsky moved and Councillor Ian Middleton seconded the following motion:

The UK government has announced only a £100 payment for "Off Grid" homes relying on oil or LPG. A big gap in fiscal support compared to the £400 for all other households on the grid.

Heating and oil prices have seen huge hikes. The average cost of filling a 1,000-litre tank at the start of the year was about £620. By August, which is oil buying season, Oxfordshire residents prices had peaked and the same tank cost £1,108 or more to fill, and the market fluctuates.

The disparity is that most people are required to pay up front for oil, while people on mains energy pay monthly. Residents don't just face a warmth

crisis but that low-income households in rural areas face a potential health crisis due to cold homes. Without action, this government risks the health of many of the 1.5 million who have no option other than to use oil or LPG to heat their homes.

There's a potential cost and service gap issue to local authorities by the increased demand for health and mental health services.

This council asks our leader to write to government to;

1. Match the £400 energy grant for ALL energy users
2. Create a package for rural Oxfordshire communities to provide grants for renewables / air source heat pumps or help switch to biofuel boilers, as well as retrofitting and insulation.
3. Recognise that this cost of living emergency has further health service impacts in Oxfordshire and fund the needs of society

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was carried by 36 votes to 0 with 14 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

The UK government has announced only a £100 payment for "Off Grid" homes relying on oil or LPG. A big gap in fiscal support compared to the £400 for all other households on the grid.

Heating and oil prices have seen huge hikes. The average cost of filling a 1,000-litre tank at the start of the year was about £620. By August, which is oil buying season, Oxfordshire residents prices had peaked and the same tank cost £1,108 or more to fill, and the market fluctuates.

The disparity is that most people are required to pay up front for oil, while people on mains energy pay monthly. Residents don't just face a warmth crisis but that low-income households in rural areas face a potential health crisis due to cold homes. Without action, this government risks the health of many of the 1.5 million who have no option other than to use oil or LPG to heat their homes.

There's a potential cost and service gap issue to local authorities by the increased demand for health and mental health services.

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1. Match the £400 energy grant for ALL energy users
2. Create a package for rural Oxfordshire communities to provide grants for renewables / air source heat pumps or help switch to biofuel boilers, as well as retrofitting and insulation.

3. Recognise that this cost of living emergency has further health service impacts in Oxfordshire and fund the needs of society

100/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR NATHAN LEY

(Agenda Item 20)

Councillor Nathan Ley moved and Councillor Charlie Hicks seconded the following motion:

This Council recognises that excessive noise pollution from major highways raises the risk of negative health outcomes for our residents, most notably cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, and sleep disturbance. This particularly affects those who live in closest proximity to the busiest major strategic roads, including the A34 and M40.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines “strongly recommends reducing noise levels produced by road traffic below 53 dB, as road traffic noise above this level is associated with adverse health effects”. However, it’s well known that noise levels are far in excess of this in many residential areas, especially where formally defined as ‘Noise Important Areas’, where the highest 1% of noise levels at residential locations can be found. This includes neighbourhoods within Abingdon, Botley and Banbury among others.

Traffic volumes on our major roads have massively increased, with the number of cars on the road doubling in the past 30 years. In light of this, and given the absence of physical sound mitigation measures along many highways-adjacent areas in Oxfordshire, we believe National Highways must take action to improve residents’ quality of life. The existing designation of several ‘Noise Important Areas’ provides a framework for further investigation, and this must be matched by appropriate physical remedies.

Acknowledging the important future role of our strategic network, Council asks the Leader to write to National Highways’ Chief Executive Nick Harris to stress the importance of funding and implementing physical noise mitigation infrastructure as soon as possible, especially pre-existing ‘Noise Important Areas’.

Following debate, the motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

This Council recognises that excessive noise pollution from major highways raises the risk of negative health outcomes for our residents, most notably cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, and sleep disturbance. This particularly affects those who live in closest proximity to the busiest major strategic roads, including the A34 and M40.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines “strongly recommends reducing noise levels produced by road traffic below 53 dB, as road traffic noise above this level is associated with adverse health effects”. However, it’s well known that noise levels are far in excess of this in many residential areas, especially where formally defined as ‘Noise Important Areas’, where the highest 1% of noise levels at residential locations can be found. This includes neighbourhoods within Abingdon, Botley and Banbury among others.

Traffic volumes on our major roads have massively increased, with the number of cars on the road doubling in the past 30 years. In light of this, and given the absence of physical sound mitigation measures along many highways-adjacent areas in Oxfordshire, we believe National Highways must take action to improve residents’ quality of life. The existing designation of several ‘Noise Important Areas’ provides a framework for further investigation, and this must be matched by appropriate physical remedies.

Acknowledging the important future role of our strategic network, Council asks the Leader to write to National Highways’ Chief Executive Nick Harris to stress the importance of funding and implementing physical noise mitigation infrastructure as soon as possible, especially pre-existing ‘Noise Important Areas’.

101/22 MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ROBIN BENNETT

(Agenda Item 21)

The time being 3.40 pm, this Motion was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.1

(Monitoring Officer’s remarks - The Monitoring Officer expressed concern about the conduct of debate during the afternoon session of the meeting. She reminded members that they had a responsibility to uphold the ethical governance of the Authority, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, and to treat others with respect.)

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Divisions Affected - All

COUNCIL 13 December 2022

Appointment of Chief Executive and designation as Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer

Report by Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Council is RECOMMENDED to approve**
 - 1.1 The appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service position to Dr Martin Reeves with a start date to be confirmed.
 - 1.2 A spot salary designation of £225,000 following a process of external benchmarking. The County Council pay policy should be amended to reflect this.
 - 1.3 The designation of Dr Martin Reeves as Returning Officer for all elections with effect from the post holder commencing their role.

Executive Summary

2. Following the cessation of the Section 113 agreement which established joint management arrangements between Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council in February 2022, the post of Chief Executive Officer and Head of Paid Service became vacant and was subsequently filled on an interim basis. A comprehensive national search and recruitment campaign has been undertaken and a full selection and appointments process was led by the Remuneration Committee.
 - 2.1 Following the completion of this process, Council is now recommended to appoint a permanent post holder.
 - 2.2 The postholder (Dr Martin Reeves) will be designated Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer. The County Council's Monitoring Officer will continue to undertake the duties of the Returning Officer following their appointment to the role at the meeting of Council on 8 February 2022 until the post holder takes up their role, whereupon the duties and accountabilities in

accordance with Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 will transfer.

Report Details

3. For this appointment, Oxfordshire County Council's Remuneration Committee has been supported and taken independent advice from Gatenby Sanderson, recruitment consultants selected following a procurement process earlier in the year.
 - 3.1 The post was advertised nationally in September 2022 with a closing date of 9th October 2022. During this time, Gatenby Sanderson held discussions with members of the Remuneration Committee and key stakeholders to support further understanding of requirements of the role. Political group leaders were kept apprised of the process throughout.
 - 3.2 Following the closing date, Gatenby Sanderson provided Oxfordshire County Council Remuneration Committee with a recommended longlist. . The Remuneration Committee met on 19 October 2022 to agree a longlist and undertake recruitment training. Guidance was provided by Gatenby Sanderson and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
 - 3.3 Following technical interviews and executive profiling, a shortlisting report was compiled and the Remuneration Committee agreed a shortlist at their meeting on Monday 7th November 2022.
 - 3.4 The final stages of the process were completed as set out below.
 - Key staff stakeholders panel – 25 November 2022
 - System stakeholders panel – 25 November 2022
 - Member's stakeholders panel – 28 November 2022
 - 3.5 The final selection panel and interview took place at a formal meeting of the Remuneration Committee on Monday 28 November 2022. The Committee were advised by Gatenby Sanderson and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
 - 3.6 The Remuneration Committee were impressed by the overall standard of the candidates. After careful consideration of all the assessment information as well as the final interviews and panel feedback its decision is to recommend the offer of appointment of Dr Martin Reeves, the current Chief Executive of Coventry City Council whom it considered demonstrated the skills and experience to meet the future needs of Oxfordshire County Council and the challenges ahead.
 - 3.7 The Remuneration Committee further recommends that the appointment be offered on a starting salary of £225,000 per annum with other conditions of employment being in accordance with those determined for Chief Executives nationally by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Executives. This salary will be subject to an annual cost of living award (as agreed as part of the National pay negotiations) and reviewed externally no less

than every three years. The County Council's pay policy will be amended to reflect this. The pay range was informed by an externally commissioned salary benchmark review undertaken earlier in the year, consideration of subsequent national pay awards and comparable national roles that have been appointed in the preceding months.

- 3.8 At their meeting on 28 November Remuneration Committee reviewed and endorsed the Chief Executive appraisal process as set out in the JNC guidance and including arrangements for 360 feedback, these annual arrangements will be implemented when the candidate takes up the position.
- 3.9 Subject to Council agreeing the Remuneration Committee's recommendations in this report and the completion of necessary checks, it is anticipated that Dr Martin Reeves will take up the appointment in 2023 following completion of notice periods.

Financial Implications

4. The existing budget provision for the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services is £190k. The recommended salary of £225k is within benchmark comparisons but £35k higher than the existing budget provision. This will be managed within the overall budget for the Council in 2023/24 and any ongoing impact addressed as part of the 2024/25 Budget and Business Planning process.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Corporate Director Finance (S151)
lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

5. There is a duty placed on every Local Authority under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to designate one of its officers as Head of Paid Service.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer and Director of Law and Governance
anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

6. The Chief Executive Officer's core responsibilities include setting and executing the organisations strategy, building and overseeing the executive team and by extension the wider workforce.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

7. The recruitment and selection process was conducted fairly in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection procedures and taking account of its Equalities Policy.

Sustainability Implications

8. The Chief Executive will have direct responsibility for ensuring the Council rises to the strategic leadership challenge of responding to the Climate Emergency declaration and to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier County. The Chief Executive will also be expected to ensure that the Council leads by example in all its activities as well as taking a lead role in influencing and working with partners across all sectors locally, regionally, and nationally to meet sustainability objectives.

Consultations

9. Remuneration Committee and political group leaders have co-designed the recruitment and appointments process.
10. Stakeholder panels have taken place with key staff, system stakeholders and Members as part of the selection process and have been facilitated by the recruitment consultant, Gatenby Sanderson. Feedback from these panels has been incorporated into the overall selection process and considered by the appointments panel, Remuneration Committee.

KAREN EDWARDS

Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Karen Edwards, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

December 2022

Divisions-N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 13 December 2022

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Members: Climate Change Delivery & Environment, Highway Management and Travel & Development Strategy

1. Core Schemes – Traffic Filters ETRO Approach

(Extraordinary Cabinet, 29 November 2022)

Cabinet was asked to approve an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to introduce six new traffic filters which the report stated would:

- make walking and cycling safer and more attractive
- make bus journeys quicker and more reliable
- enable new and improved bus routes
- support investment in modern buses (including the ZEBRA project to fund up to 159 electric buses)
- help tackle climate change, reduce local air pollution and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

The meeting heard from around 50 speakers, for, against and in some cases asking for specific changes. The recommendations were amended to authorise the Corporate Director Environment & Place to make minor amendments and include any recommendations from the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee's report and for Cabinet to be informed of any changes. The amended recommendations were agreed.

Cabinet Member: Climate Change Delivery & Environment

2. Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement

(Cabinet, 15 November 2022)

A new Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement was proposed to include a policy focus on environmental resilience and nature recovery. This would support and strengthen the ambitions in the Council's Corporate Plan to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier County.

The recommendations were approved including an amendment to delegate authority to make amendments to the strategy to the Corporate Director Environment & Place.

Cabinet Member: Finance

3. Business Management & Monitoring Report – August/September 2022

(Cabinet, 15 November 2022)

Cabinet considered the report which presented the September 2022 performance, risk and finance position for the Council. As noted in the last report there were significant and persistent challenges around demand for children's social care and the availability of care placements and front-line social work staff. Issues and volatility in the wider economy, including inflation and workforce shortages, also continue to increase the risk to the financial position for the council and the overall landscape looks much more challenging than when the budget was set in February 2022.

Cabinet noted the report and the virements, supplementary estimate and bad debt write-off listed in the report.

4. Treasury Management Mid-Term Review (2022/23)

(Cabinet, 15 November 2022)

Cabinet had before it a report covering the treasury management activity for the first half of 2022/23. It provided an update on the anticipated position and prudential indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 agreed as part of the council's budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2022.

Treasury Management activity was predicted to contribute a £1.6m improvement over what was initially forecast. Cabinet noted the report and recommended to Council to note the council's treasury management activity the first half of 2022/23.

5. Property Strategy

(Cabinet, 15 November 2022)

Cabinet received a paper presenting a property strategy for Oxfordshire County Council which set out the long-term strategic framework for the development and delivery of economic, social and environmental objectives that relate to the council's property and assets portfolios. The proposed strategy sets out long-term objectives covering the council's three main portfolios – operational accommodation, community assets and investment assets.

The recommendations were approved including the establishment of a cross party Cabinet Advisory Group to oversee the development of the options and business cases for the city centre accommodation review, part of the operational assets portfolio.

Cabinet Member: Highway Management

6. HIF2 Update

(Extraordinary Cabinet, 20 November 2022)

Cabinet received an update report which emphasised that the Council remained committed to delivering the HIF2 Scheme. As part of the ongoing delivery of the HIF2 A40 Programme and in light of the global inflationary pressures being experienced in all sectors, a detailed review had been undertaken of the HIF2 Scheme. As a result of this review, cost pressures had been identified that result in the HIF2 Scheme exceeding its current budget. This had made it

necessary to obtain Cabinet approval to withdraw the current CPO and SRO from the ongoing statutory process to allow further time to review the scheme in detail and consider mitigations to these cost pressures.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations.

Cabinet Member: Travel & Development Strategy

7. Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan

(Extraordinary Cabinet, 29 November 2022)

The Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) is the first area travel plan to have been produced. The report before Cabinet set out the results of a public consultation on the draft COTP document and recommended approval of the plan. The report also set out a number of recommended amendments to be made to the plan following public consultation.

Cabinet agreed a number of amendments including removing paragraphs headed “Wider commitment to/ a better balance on 20mph speed limits” from the report. Another amendment authorised the relevant Corporate Director and Cabinet Member to agree amendments to bring the document in line with any Scrutiny recommendations subsequently agreed to by the Cabinet. It was also decided to bring a report to January Cabinet on a programme for the other measures mentioned in COTP.

Scrutiny Reports

8. Cabinet responses to reports received from scrutiny committees

(Cabinet, 15 November 2022)

The Cabinet papers included for information the formal response to the report from the Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Citizens’ Jury. Cabinet accepted the recommendation that the Council develops a clear plan as to how any future Citizens’ Juries would best be incorporated within the wider policy-development and decision-making processes of Council.

9. Reports received from scrutiny committees

(Extraordinary Cabinet, 29 November 2022)

Cabinet received reports on, and will respond formally to, the following:

Reports of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan
- Traffic Filters

LIZ LEFFMAN

Leader of the Council

November 2022

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Divisions Affected – ALL

COUNCIL

13 December 2022

REVIEW OF COUNCIL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Council is RECOMMENDED

- a) To undertake a review of the Council's governance arrangements as proposed in Annex 1.
- b) To establish a 'Future Council Governance Working Group' comprising a minimum of 9 members (4 Liberal Democrat Green Alliance, 3 Conservative Independent Alliance and 2 Labour & Cooperative Party) that reports to the Audit and Governance Committee which will make any recommendations to Council.
- c) To request Group Leaders to nominate members to the working group

Executive summary

2. The Council debated and agreed the following motion on 1 November 2022:

'This Council has considered a change of Governance in the past from Leader and Cabinet to having a more inclusive Committee structure. The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance wishes to review the decision-making structures of the County Council, with the aim of operating in a much more inclusive way that can involve all the talents of the Council.'

The Council now requests the Director of Law and Governance to institute a Full Governance Review of the County Council as soon as practicable, with any recommended changes to the Council's Executive and Governance structure to be decided by Full Council and fully implemented by May 2024.'

Background

3. Oxfordshire County Council has operated the leader and cabinet model of executive arrangements since 2002 in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.
4. Councils must operate one of three governance models:
 - a) Executive arrangements including leader and cabinet or directly elected mayor and cabinet.
 - b) Committee system broadly similar to the governance arrangements operated by councils prior to the Local Government Act 2000.
 - c) Submit a different form of governance for consideration by the Secretary of State. It is understood that none have been submitted to date.

Governance review 2018-19

5. The last time that the Council considered a change of governance was in 2018-19. Council passed the following motion on 11 July 2018:

‘This Council, wishing to ensure that governance arrangements for the County are transparent, inclusive and reflect the political situation which exists, asks the Cabinet to work with Political Group Leaders to come forward with a plan to replace the Cabinet with a committee structure or alternative governance and committee models which could further strengthen the work of the Council.

These Committees would have delegated decision making powers from the Council and would be politically balanced. Locality Committees would be consulted on policy and budget matters by the Committees. Robust Scrutiny Structures would be put in place. The Plan to be worked on with a view to the change in the structure being put in place as soon as practicable.’

6. On 18 October 2018, the Cabinet resolved:
 - a) To agree that the governance review should also include a review of potential improvements to the existing arrangements, in the interests of completeness.
 - b) To note the headline themes arising from the councillor survey.
 - c) To agree in principle to the setting up of a Governance Review Task Group.

- d) To note that Group Leaders will be asked to make appointments to a task group (once Cabinet has agreed to its constitution and terms of reference).
 - e) To agree that the task group report back to Political Group Leaders and to Cabinet with recommended options for change.
7. The recommendations from the working group included the formation of politically balanced Cabinet committees, earlier publication of decisions on the Cabinet Forward Plan, exploring the value of area committees, improving the work of locality groups and allocating specific time for the discussion of policy matters in scrutiny committee work plans.
8. At the meeting held on 22 January 2019, the Cabinet was not supportive of making a major constitutional changes at a time of significant transformation for the Council as it entered a strategic partnership with Cherwell District Council. The recommendation to establish Cabinet committees and related actions was not taken forward.

Proposed approach

9. It is for Council to decide what the best governance arrangements are for Oxfordshire County Council to achieve effective and efficient decision making that is in the best interests of the county's residents and businesses.
10. It is proposed that a politically balanced working group is established that reports to the Audit and Governance Committee. Political balance does not require a non-aligned member to be appointed to the group but the Council may decide there is some value inviting a non-aligned member in keeping with the Electoral Review Working Group. This would increase the membership of the working group from 9 to 10 members and would need to be reflected in recommendation at 1 b).
11. The terms of reference including timeline for the cross-party working group is attached at Annex 1. These have been developed having regard to the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the Local Government Association's jointly developed framework for governance reviews.
12. An important part of the process will be to assess the purpose of the governance change and what it is setting out to achieve. Before looking at potential new governance arrangements, an initial assessment will be undertaken of the strengths and weaknesses of the current governance arrangements.
13. The benefits of different decision-making models will need to be compared by looking at the success or otherwise of governance arrangements in other local

authorities. This will include county councils (and other types of council) who have changed from a cabinet and leader to a committee model of governance and in some instances back again to a cabinet and leader model.

14. Regular updates from the working group will be received by the Audit and Governance Committee and the final report and recommendations will be considered by that committee and presented to full Council.

Corporate policies and priorities

15. The Council has a stated priority to ensure a vibrant participatory democracy

Financial implications

16. This work arises from a Council motion on 1 November 2022 so no budget has been allocated for this purpose in 2022-23. A governance review is wide ranging and external expertise from organisations such as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny will be required to facilitate particular elements of the process. In the event of a change of governance, members' allowances will need to be revised to reflect the new arrangements. A budget of £10,000 will be required for this purpose. However, it is expected that this one-off budget requirement will be absorbed within current revenue budget.

Legal implications

17. Governance arrangements are included in the Local Government Act (LGA) 2000, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Section 9B of Part 1A of the LGA 2000 sets out the three governance models: executive arrangements, committee system or prescribed arrangements. Section 9BA sets out the power of the Secretary of State to prescribe additional permitted governance arrangements.

Staff implications

18. The review will require significant support from the Democratic Services Team and this may have an impact on other activities of the team. In the event there is a change of governance the constitution will need re-writing.

Equality and inclusion implications

19. Any proposal to change the Council's governance arrangements will need to be accompanied by an equality impact assessment which will identify how the changes affect protected groups.

Sustainability implications

20. To avoid travelling, virtual meetings will be held with representatives from other councils where possible.

Risk management

21. This paper considers a review of governance arrangements and as such, undertaking a review does not place the Council under any additional risk except a financial one in respect of funding such work. Risks and opportunities arising from the review will be considered in due course.

Consultation

22. The working group will need to consider the best approach to engaging with residents and local businesses on future governance arrangements.

Anita Bradley
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annexes: Annex 1 – terms of reference including timeline

Background papers: Centre for Governance and Scrutiny
Rethinking Council Governance for the 20's
2020

Contact Officer: Simon Harper
Head of Governance
Email simon.harper@oxfordshire.gov.uk

November 2022

Oxfordshire County Council - Governance review	
Council resolution – 1 November 2022	<p>This Council has considered a change of Governance in the past from Leader and Cabinet to having a more inclusive Committee structure. The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance wishes to review the decision-making structures of the County Council, with the aim of operating in a much more inclusive way that can involve all the talents of the Council.</p> <p>The Council now requests the Director of Law and Governance to institute a Full Governance Review of the County Council as soon as practicable, with any recommended changes to the Council's Executive and Governance structure to be decided by Full Council and fully implemented by May 2024.</p>
What do we need to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assess current position including strengths and weaknesses. b) What is the purpose of governance change? c) Agree design principles: will proposed changes to structures and ways of working meet stated objectives? d) Explore different ways of working e) Decide overall structural needs f) Determine content of final report to Council
Who do we need to consult with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) County councillors b) Engagement with residents and businesses c) District Councils in Oxfordshire d) Parish and town councils in Oxfordshire e) Centre for Governance and Scrutiny f) Local Government Association g) County Council Network h) Other county councils who have changed their governance arrangements. i) Other local authorities as appropriate
Useful information	<p>External: Centre for Governance and Scrutiny publication 'Rethinking Council Governance for the 20's'</p> <p>Internal: Council motion passed 18 July 2018,</p>

	Cabinet decisions 17 October 2018 and 22 January 2019
How long will it take?	<p>Bi-monthly meetings of the working group – January to December 2023</p> <p>Progress reports to Audit and Governance Committee – 19 July and 20 September 2023</p> <p>Progress reports to meetings of Political Group Leaders</p> <p>Draft report to Audit and Governance Committee – 29 November 2023</p> <p>Final report to Council - 12 December 2023</p>

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – 13 DECEMBER 2022

SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

***Members of the Council are requested to wear their identity badges at all times when attending meetings at County Hall**

ITEM/TIME	ITEM	PROPOSALS (M = Motion; SEC = Secunder; Am = Amendment S = Statement; Q = Question; REC = Recommendation to be determined)
<p align="center">1</p> <p>10.30</p>	<p>Minutes (page 1)</p> <p>To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2022 subject to the following amendments:-</p> <p>86/22 – Petitions and Public Address</p> <p>Petitions – Mary Totman–“..... many children were receiving inadequate educational provision. She refuted the suggestion that all of these problems were the result of national issues and <u>said</u> that the County Council’s policies were a contributory factor.”</p> <p>Olivia Johnson – “.....could thrive and requested that the Council replaced its <u>adversarial</u> practices with collaboration with parents. She requested that the Council adhered to.....”</p>	
<p align="center">2</p>	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Cllrs Bulmer, Champken-Woods, Gant, Paule, Reynolds</p>	

3	Declarations of Interest	
4	Official Communications Response from HM The King Report on Farm visit Recent awards received by the Council:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Zero Emission Zone was the winner of the ‘Clear Air Projects’ category at the inaugural City Transport and Traffic Innovation (CiTTi) Awards (see press release) • The North Oxford Corridor improvements programme won a silver International Green Apple Environmental award • The A40 Oxford North scheme won a silver International Green Apple Environmental award • The Benson Relief Road scheme received the International Green Apple Environmental award ‘Green Champion of the year 2022’ • Catering Services – “Most Improved Service” 	
5	Appointments No changes to committee membership have been notified	
6 10.45	Petitions and Public Address <i>Any person may address the Council on an item on the agenda subject to the provisions in CPR 10.2 of the Constitution</i> Petitions - 3 minutes to speak	Petitions Satarah Campbell – 250 bus route from Bicester to Oxford John Tanner - Ban private vehicles from Abingdon Rd whilst Botley Rd is closed and make the P&R free

	Public Address – 3 minutes to speak (reduced from 5 minutes at the discretion of the Chair – CPR 10.3).	<p>Public Address</p> <p>2 speakers on Abingdon Road motion</p> <p>Joanne Gilder (speech to be read) – Motions 13 and 16</p> <p>Terez Moore – Items 12, 13 and 16</p>
7 11.10	<p>Questions with Notice from Members of the Public</p> <p>Mr Sajjad Malik to Councillor Andrew Gant</p> <p>Mr Richard Parnham to Councillor Andrew Gant</p> <p>Mr Peter West to Councillor Andrew Gant</p> <p>Mr John Skinner to Councillor Andrew Gant</p> <p>Ms Susanne McIvor to Councillor Calum Miller</p> <p>Ms Victoria Shepherd to Councillor Duncan Enright</p> <p>Mr Gregory O’Broin to Councillor Pete Sudbury</p> <p>Ms Judith Harley to Councillor Andrew Gant</p> <p>Ms Victoria Campbell to Councillor Calum Miller (via Teams)</p>	<p>Gant</p> <p>Gant</p> <p>Gant</p> <p>Gant</p> <p>Miller</p> <p>Enright</p> <p>Sudbury</p> <p>Gant</p> <p>Miller</p>

<p>8 11.25</p> <p>30 mins</p>	<p>Questions with Notice from Members of the Council (<i>Addenda</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Edosomwan to Miller 2. Champken-Woods to Phillips 3. Bartholomew to Gant 4. Hicks to Gant 5. Povolotsky to Sudbury 6. Povolotsky to Sudbury 7. Povolotsky to Gant 8. Thomas to Hannaby 9. Saul to Miller 10. Leverton to Gant 11. Ford to Phillips 12. Fenton to Gant 13. Reeves to Phillips 14. Reeves to Gant 15. Reeves to Enright 16. Fenton to Sudbury 17. Field-Johnson to Gant 18. Field-Johnson to Enright 19. Field-Johnson to Enright 20. Baines to Gant 21. Baines to Gant 22. Baines to Miller 23. Fenton to Brighthouse 24. Middleton to Leffman 25. Walker to Gant 26. Walker to Enright 27. Walker to Gant 28. Fatemian to Leffman 29. Fatemian to Brighthouse 30. Fatemian to Leffman 31. Snowdon to Miller 32. Snowdon to Enright 33. Mallon to Leffman 34. Sibley to Enright 35. Bennett to Gant 36. Bennett to Enright 37. Bennett to Lygo 	
<p>9. 11.55</p> <p>10 mins</p>	<p>Appointment of Chief Executive and designation as Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer (<i>page 17</i>)</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p>	<p>M Leffman SEC Brighthouse S</p>

	<p>The Council is RECOMMENDED to approve</p> <p>1.1 The appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service position to Dr Martin Reeves with a start date to be confirmed.</p> <p>1.2 A spot salary designation of £225,000 following a process of external benchmarking. The County Council pay policy should be amended to reflect this.</p> <p>1.3 The designation of Dr Martin Reeves as Returning Officer for all elections with effect from the post holder commencing their role.</p>	
<p>10 12.05 30 mins</p>	<p>Report of the Cabinet (page 21)</p> <p>Climate Change Delivery & Environment, Highway Management and Travel & Development Strategy (Peter Sudbury, Andrew Gant & Duncan Enright)</p> <p>Climate Change Delivery & Environment (Pete Sudbury)</p> <p>Finance (Calum Miller)</p> <p>Highway Management (Andrew Gant)</p> <p>Travel & Development Strategy (Duncan Enright)</p> <p>Scrutiny Reports</p>	<p>Q. Baines (1) Q. Haywood (1) Q. Povolotsky (1) Q Bennett (1) Q Hicks (1) Q Middleton (1)</p> <p>Q. Povolotsky (4) Q Baines (5) Q Haywood (5) Q Middleton (5)</p> <p>Q Webber (6) Q Cherry (6) Q Hicks (6)</p> <p>Q Baines (7) Q Hicks (7) Q Bennett (7) Q Haywood (7)</p>

	Break for lunch	
<p>11 1.30</p> <p>20 mins</p>	<p>Electoral review: Council size (Addenda)</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>The Council is RECOMMENDED To agree to the Council Size submission attached to this report which recommends to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) that</p> <p>a)The number of elected members should be increased by 6 from 63 to 69</p> <p>b) There should be single-member Divisions if possible</p>	<p>M Gawrysiak SEC Coles Spokesperson Mallon Spokesperson Fawcett</p>
<p>12 1.50</p> <p>10 mins</p>	<p>Review of Council Governance Arrangements (Page 25)</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>The Council is RECOMMENDED</p> <p>a) To undertake a review of the Council's governance arrangements as proposed in Annex 1.</p> <p>b) To establish a 'Future Council Governance Working Group' comprising a minimum of 9 members (4 Liberal Democrat Green Alliance, 3 Conservative Independent Alliance and 2 Labour & Cooperative Party) that reports to the Audit and Governance Committee which will make any recommendations to Council.</p>	<p>M Chair SEC Vice-Chair S</p>

	c) To request Group Leaders to nominate members to the working group	
<p>13 2.00</p> <p>30 mins</p>	<p>Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>This Council acknowledges the difficulties experienced by certain parents and students in the delivery of its SEND service and pays tribute to the testimonies of parents heard at Full Council on 1 November 2022.</p> <p>This Council places on public record the importance of delivering timely assessments, reviews and information-sharing to parents and resolves to improve its service delivery and working practices as soon as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>This Council resolves to recommend the Cabinet to include as wide a range of consultees as possible in drawing up such improvement plans which may include a politically proportionate, cross-party advisory group of Councillors, together with parent-guardian delegates with direct experience of the Council's SEND service.</p> <p>To ensure that this matter is kept front of mind, Council resolves to ask, via the Chairman of the People Overview and scrutiny committee, that said committee make it a priority of the utmost importance and urgency to place this as standing item on the agenda.</p>	<p>M Reeves SEC Fatemian Am Webber SEC Middleton S Brighthouse S Howson S Baines</p>
14	Motion by Councillor Damian Haywood	M Haywood

<p>2.30</p> <p>15 mins</p>	<p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>Banbury is working currently towards joining the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities led by a partnership group coordinated by Age UK Oxfordshire. This council looks to support this initiative through the following actions:</p> <p>Promote positive images of ageing in all of our communications to tackle the narrative around ageing. We call on people, services and partners to recognise the need to change both the language and images used when talking about (and with) older people.</p> <p>Support ongoing activity to raise awareness of the benefits of older workers, encouraging employers to change their approaches to recruiting, reskilling and retaining older employees. Council further supports the need for innovative and radically new ideas and options to support people aged 50-64 who are out of work, to enable them to age well, live well and improve their overall quality of life.</p> <p>Champion more age-friendly activity and infrastructure in our neighbourhoods, so more older residents can age well in their local communities, with access to the right services, housing, information, infrastructure and opportunities - social, cultural or economic. The voice of older people must be heard to ensure that they continue to contribute to and take a leading role where they live.</p> <p>We ask that these actions are referred to Cabinet for implementation</p>	<p>SEC Cherry S Bearder S Middleton S Webber</p>
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<p>15 2.45 20 mins</p>	<p>Motion by Councillor Sally Povolotsky</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>Council notes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thames Water discharged raw sewage into Oxfordshire rivers 5,028 times in 2021. All 10 Oxon based works discharged into the rivers in 2021; 2. Calculations indicate Oxford and Witney treatment works can only cope with 62% of the capacity need, and in Banbury for just 49% of requirements; 3. Discharges have become routine, rather than emergency response to exceptional conditions. <p>This council believes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The rules on sewage discharges must be tightened and enforcement improved, in conjunction with the Environment Agency; 2. The Government must make capital funding urgently available to address these issues; 3. Solutions cannot be local, as sewage output in one geographic area affects other areas. <p>Council recommends the Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Leader to write to Rt Hon Therese Coffey MP, requesting an acceleration in the capital programme to lower risks of untreated sewage discharges into our rivers, and an assurance that housing developers will be expected to fund water infrastructure to meet needs of new housing; 2. the Leader and Chief Executive to work with other local authorities to call on the Government to provide 	<p>M Povolotsky SEC S Coles S Baines S Field-Johnson S Bennett S Gant S Haywood S Miller S Middleton S van Mierlo S Fenton</p>
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	<p>guidance and funding to local planning authorities to challenge water companies to deliver the urgent upgrades required to water treatment capacity.</p> <p>Council resolves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to set up a county-wide water resilience working group that will develop appropriate policy to guide planning application determination and enforcement in areas where sewage treatment is insufficient, policy which incorporates legislation, integration, prevention, rectification at source, and the polluter pays principle. 	
<p>16 3.05</p> <p>10 mins</p>	<p>Motion by Councillor Michael Waine</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>This Council welcomes the changes to its scrutiny function generally and the creation of dedicated People, Place and Performance & Corporate Services committees offering more targeted scrutiny of specific workstreams.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the successes of the People committee in providing effective scrutiny of the very significant challenges facing Adult Social Care and Children's Services, Education and Schools issues have, at times, appeared to be marginalised.</p> <p>Accordingly, Council resolves to ask Audit & Governance to consider the question of whether the Education Scrutiny Committee should be re-established as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function in any governance review so as to ensure that Education policy issues can be more</p>	<p>M Waine SEC Reeves S Brighthouse S Fenton</p>

	fully addressed by members on a deliberative and cross-party basis	
17 3.15	<p>Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves</p> <p><i>Movers and seconders 5 mins and speaking in debate 3 minutes, CPR 15.4.2</i></p> <p>This Council notes with concern that highways and transport spend now accounts for only 8% of its revenue spend.</p> <p>Given the comparatively small expenditure on keeping our roads safe and in good repair, it is vital that the Council's service is properly staffed and that such staff strike a reasonable balance between the needs of our City, towns and parishes.</p> <p>In certain areas of its highways service, this Council acknowledges that there are significant staffing challenges in the timely provision of Traffic Regulation Orders, in particular, and in dealing with the needs of our rural communities in general.</p> <p>This Council recommends the Cabinet to commission a report into the staffing, recruitment and retention challenges facing its highways service for consideration by Cabinet as soon as practicable, with a response published by Cabinet and made available to members no later than its meeting on 28 March 2023</p> <p>.</p>	<p>M Reeves SEC Snowdon S Brighthouse S Enright S Field-Johnson S Gant S Phillips S Miller S Baines S Haywood S Enright</p>

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Agenda item 13 – Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves – Amendment to be moved by Councillor Richard Webber

This Council acknowledges the difficulties experienced by certain parents and students in the delivery of its SEND service and pays tribute to the testimonies of parents heard at Full Council on 1 November 2022.

This Council places on public record the importance of delivering timely assessments, reviews and information-sharing to parents and resolves to improve its service delivery and working practices as soon as reasonably practicable.

~~This Council resolves to recommend the Cabinet to include as wide a range of consultees as possible in drawing up such improvement plans which may include a politically proportionate, cross-party advisory group of Councillors, together with parent-guardian delegates with direct experience of the Council's SEND service.~~

~~To ensure that this matter is kept front of mind, Council resolves to ask, via the Chairman of the People Overview and scrutiny committee, that said committee make it a priority of the utmost importance and urgency to place this as standing item on the agenda.~~

This Council recalls its motion, adopted on 7 October, that noted the systemic underfunding of SEND by national government. It renews its call for adequate funding of these essential services.

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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC – 13 DECEMBER
2022**

1. Mr Sajjad Malik to Councillor Andrew Gant

Question

Can the council explain why the LTN bollards around Temple Cowley have been capped off for weeks?

Answer

To follow

2. Mr Richard Parnham to Councillor Andrew Gant

Question

Does the council intend to seek to have pollution monitoring stations re-installed around Marsh Lane / Headley Way, to allow for 2023 baseline data to be captured, ahead of the planned installation of the Marston Ferry Road traffic filter?"

Answer

To follow

3. Mr Peter West to Councillor Andrew Gant

Question

In light of the revelations about traffic monitoring at the Enfield LTN legal dispute, can the council confirm whether or not their traffic monitoring sensors can detect traffic travelling across them at 10 miles per hour or less?

Answer

To follow

4. Mr John Skinner to Councillor Andrew Gant

Question

How does Oxfordshire County Council intend to relieve the extra traffic, pollution and bus delays, caused by the East Oxford LTNs, around St Clements during 2023?

Answer

To follow

5. Ms Suzanne McIvor to Councillor Calum Miller

Question

This Council has recently proposed the area of land opposite Oxford Parkway Station and known as 'the Triangle' as an alternative potential location for Oxford United's new stadium. Councillor Liz Leffman has stated publicly that the new site (proposed by the Council itself) "improves things because there's more space between this site and Kidlington and it's also got additional roads between it and the town". We cannot understand how this 'improves things' at all. The new site – one of the last remaining areas of Green Belt between Oxford and Kidlington – shares many of the same concerns from the local community that apply to Stratfield Brake, as well as being directly adjacent to/part of a 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act S41 area. It also raises new concerns, particularly for North Oxford residents given the closer proximity of the site to this area. Given such widely shared concerns; the scale of this potential construction project and community impact; and the fact that the Cabinet previously recommended a public engagement exercise before allowing Stratfield Brake to be considered as a site, will the Council undertake that before formal negotiations are approved for the new site, an appropriate public consultation will also be undertaken which is accessible to all local residents; ensures local residents' views are properly and fairly heard; and designed in such a way to ensure that it does not give unequal weight to OUFC supporters from across the County (and beyond) who will not be impacted by any new stadium on this site in contrast to local residents?

Answer

To follow

6. Ms Victoria Shepherd to Councillor Duncan Enright

Question

Noting that HIF2 has been withdrawn, and that HIF1 faces similar if not greater risks given its scale, rising interest rates, and construction industry challenges, not to

mention opposition from the Environment Agency, and opposition from the 5 most affected Parish Councils, does the Council Leader agree that it would be logical to withdraw current HIF1 plans - contentious, and outdated - to allow time to amend and re-scope the scheme focusing on lower Carbon, more sustainable transport options?

Answer

The A40 improvements known as HIF2 have not been withdrawn. While the previous HIF2 Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) has now been withdrawn, OCC's commitment to improving the A40 corridor remains and a revised HIF2 scheme proposal – and refreshed CPO – will be being brought forward in early 2023.

The increased funding for HIF1 was agreed relatively recently - in early 2022 – and while the challenges, especially inflation, are similar across all infrastructure programmes, we are confident that the final scheme will be both affordable and with an increased focus on our priorities such as those mentioned.

The HIF1 programme is planned to enter its Detailed Design phase shortly and this will be a further opportunity to manage costs effectively but also review how it meets OCC's priorities.

7. Mr Gregory O'Broin to Councillor Pete Sudbury

In light of the recent statement by Sinisa Galac of National Highways on carbon emissions for the lower Thames crossing (www.newcivilengineer.com) and this Council's Climate Emergency Declaration and LTCP policies, does the Council Leader agree that all Capital projects should require and publish an independently verified reconciliation of Capital Carbon emissions for the materials supply chain, transport and construction process calculating the quantity of embodied carbon for each Project using an objective technique such as the "environmentally extended input output" (EE-IOE) methodology as published by Leeds University along with an estimate of Operational carbon emissions so there is solid data for the carbon burden and reductions required to achieve net zero in the transport system by 2050.

Answer

To follow

8. Ms Judith Harley to Councillor Andrew Gant

Question

In order to evaluate whether traffic has "evaporated" inside the East Oxford Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), do you think it fair and ethical to use roads which have been physically blocked off as part of the East Oxford LTN trial (such as Divinity Road) for evaluation as opposed to adjacent roads where traffic has been diverted?

Answer

To follow

9. Ms Victoria Campbell to Councillor Calum Miller

Question

Does the Council believe it is appropriate to be so actively involved in the site selection for a stadium for a privately-owned commercial organisation, particularly when the site suggested by the Council is Green Belt and appears to contradict the Local Plan covering this area?

Answer

To follow

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

ANNEX 2

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received. The time allowed for this agenda item will not exceed 30 minutes. Should any questioner not have received an answer in that time, a written answer will be provided.

<p>1. COUNCILLOR IMADE EDOSOMWAN</p> <p>The residents in my division are asking about what is happening about finding another site for Oxford United FC. They lease on the Kassam Stadium will end in May 2026 and all Oxford United fans need to know that we are doing all we can to secure the future of the club. Can the Cabinet member provide an update for all OU fans?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Edosomwan.</p> <p>As the county's only professional football league club, I know that Oxford United FC is close to the hearts of thousands of people across this county. I fully recognise the challenges facing OUFC and we are committed to engaging with the club to achieve a sustainable future.</p> <p>I can confirm that officers have been working closely and constructively with OUFC since the cabinet meeting in March to review the options available. OUFC was asked in March to provide information to support decision-making. In November, we received a good deal of information from OUFC, and officers are currently reviewing and clarifying this information to enable us to make a decision about next steps. This will need to take account of both the needs of the club and the impact of any proposals. Officers' report and recommendation will be received by cabinet at our meeting in January.</p>
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2. COUNCILLOR NIGEL CHAMPKEN-WOODS

Given the difficulties experienced by both members of this Council and members of the public in promptly getting in touch with staff to resolve local issues, will the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services now undertake to ensure that Council webpages including "Main contacts in the council for councillors" are now updated for accuracy without delay?

COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

I thank Cllr Champken-Woods for his question for cabinet and I understand that he has also been in touch with the council's Director for Customer Experience.

The customer service team have created a dedicated page for the general public to use via the link [Customer service centre main contact details | Oxfordshire County Council](#) and this details the service area, phone number and a link to online forms.

The team have also reviewed and updated the dedicated page for Councillors at the following link too [Main contacts in the council for councillors | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet](#).

Thank you

3. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

You will recall that I spoke at your decisions meeting on November 17th in relation to a proposed speed limit reduction on the A4155 from Henley to Reading running past Shiplake.

Although I didn't agree with your decision, I would like to thank you for your diligence and thoroughness when considering the matter.

However, I must ask what the point of a consultation is, if when 85% of respondents - including the police - object to the change, but it still goes ahead?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

Statutory highway consultations are not a 'referendum' where the outcome directly determines the final decision. Rather it is one piece of information that is taken into account by Officers when they make their recommendation, and the Cllr uses this to make their decision. It not only allows Officers/Cllrs to get an overview of the general feeling towards the proposal, but also allows for more specific/local information to be collected, appraised and considered.

4. COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS

I am very glad to see your recent announcement that the County Council is going to replace the plastic bollards in the East Oxford LTNs with steel bollards so that they are less easily to vandalise. Thank you to you and to the officers involved for your hard work to make this happen.

Residents in Cowley Division are rightfully asking why this decision does not also cover the three Cowley LTNs, which are also suffering from repeated vandalism of the plastic bendy bollards, leading to an unsafe situation right now where children play in the street thinking it is safe but, because the bollards are missing and motor vehicles are passing through, it isn't. I understand there is ongoing work to install changes in the Cowley LTN by Spring 2023 but this will not address the very live concerns of residents now and over the coming months while the bollards are still missing.

Please, therefore, could you commit to installing steel bollards across the three Cowley LTNs (as well as East Oxford LTNs) as soon as possible to cover the period between now and Spring 2023? Specifically, this would be at the following seven modal filters: Crowell Road, Beauchamp Lane, Church Hill Road, Clive Road, Junction Road, Crescent Road, and Temple Road.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

We continue to monitor the Cowley LTNs and replace bollards, which have been removed, whilst working closely with the police on all reports of vandalism and seeking prosecution. So far, four people have been arrested in relation to illegal activity associated with LTNs – two have received community resolutions, one has received a caution and one is currently on police bail pending further investigation. This is a clear message that criminal activity will not be tolerated. We are replacing bollards as soon as they are received from manufacturers. Officers are engaging with the local community on further measures to help support LTNs in Cowley.

5. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY

Given this council's commitment to Net Zero and the current financial, public and energy crisis, what is the adjusted cost to council to hit net zero operations by 2030 and the new "whole system" 2040 target, and has the risk increased to hitting our targets given the lack of investment or funding by the current government decision making?

COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY AND ENVIRONMENT

Our whole system target has shifted to "As early as possible in the 2040s". The impact of the financial and energy crisis on the costs to achieve our own estate net zero by 2030 target is not clear at this stage. However, (i) the Ukraine war and resultant focus on "Energy security" and (ii) Chris Skidmore MP's emerging review of net zero make it likely that decarbonisation of electricity will proceed faster than anticipated (globally, the IEA predicts that renewables are expected to increase by 50% in 5y, up from 30% predicted a year ago), reducing our persisting "Scope 2" emissions and increasing the short-term impact of our electrification of heat and transport.

Whilst the cost of borrowing and materials may negatively affect business cases in some areas, rising energy costs and market volatility significantly strengthen the business case and need for our investment in energy efficiency measures and resilience through renewables. The strategy in our Climate Action Framework to prioritise the energy hierarchy (demand reduction first) and also to work in partnership with the private sector in hard to decarbonise areas remains the right one.

This year we have carried out auditing of our major buildings and fleet in line with our carbon management plan. The investment needs for these programmes are reflected in the proposed capital programme and pipeline. In May we will publish our annual review of our internal carbon management plan and our forward work plan which will take into account the emerging context in how we progress to meet net zero.

To meet the target of a zero carbon Oxfordshire as early as possible in the 2040s requires significant investment across all sectors – householders, private and public sectors. It is not yet clear how and whether central government policy making and subsidy and grants to support net zero and energy resilience will be affected by changing economic circumstances. We welcome the announcement of further funding for retrofit in the autumn statement and would like to see this significantly extended. Investment in retrofit of buildings is a highly effective route to mitigate shocks from energy volatility, reduce emissions and support vulnerable householders. We are currently developing, in partnership with City and District colleagues joint actions to highlight where collaboration can accelerate the transition to net zero. We continue our activity through the innovation hub to collaborate with the private and academic sectors to address challenges that promote investibility in net zero for example through project Local Energy Oxfordshire, Park and Charge, and our hydrogen collaboration.

6. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY

The Water Resource South East (WRSE) draft plan, released in November, once again clearly identifies a single large infrastructure water storage plan in this county (SESRO), on a timeline that advances this community damaging infrastructure project on a timeline before the movement of water from the Severn to the Thames. Given that Thames Water has openly reported they have failed to deal with leaks in this county, in fact they are 23% over the published target for 2022. What is the cabinet member for the portfolio doing to ensure that Thames Water focuses on water resilience, leaks, network maintenance and current infrastructure investment and how is the council steering the dialogue with a privatised company that has such huge negative impacts on our Highways?

COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY AND ENVIRONMENT

The future of water supplies is an area where we all have an imperative to get the right answer.

As you may be aware, we recently held a water supply summit (an idea originally suggested by Cllr Povolotsky), with stakeholders including TW, OfWat, WRSE, GARD. District, County and parish cllrs to explore the underlying drivers of the proposals in the WRSE consultation. (Unfortunately, the TW one has been delayed until mid December, so we were unable to consider it). We note that the new plan reduces the size of the proposed reservoir by a third. We have always, as a CC, opposed the SESRO plan, and our emerging view is that the uncertainties in population growth and impacts of climate change give a high risk of it being unnecessary, and, conversely, that starting it at the outset of the plan crowds out funding for much more scalable and climate-resilient schemes (recycling and transfers) which should be the overwhelming early priority given the persisting uncertainties around how climate change may play out in the UK.

The County Council's Network Management team are continually working with TWU at a local level on their maintenance, partaking in monthly performance meetings based on the highway criteria set out by New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991. Utilities are expected to liaise with the local authority and to notify of works through the DfT Street Manger system to give provisional notice and book their road space. Large projects which are based off the highway do not fall under this. The Network team cannot instruct them on where they are to focus or have any influence over the resilience or priority of investment.

7. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY

Steventon bridge has now had a single channel for 12 months due to issues related to the Railway bridge structure, the updates are now lacking, and all seems to be hinging on discussions with network rail. What's clear is that the damage and structural issues related to the bridge is due to the high % of LGV / HGV traffic along a historic piece of our highways network, and a village that was never designed for 40+ tonne vehicles. Can the cabinet member please promise to come and visit the site, and feel/see the urgency, the literal vibration and noise which is damaging not only the bridge but peoples lives, homes and potentially foundations. Can the cabinet member please clearly state why a weight restriction across the bridge has not been considered despite the obvious and visible ongoing damage being caused by higher weight vehicles?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

Steventon Railway Bridge has many structural defects and is suffering from weathering and general deterioration. The cracking appears to have been primarily caused by historic settlement of the supports, which appears to have largely stopped. The primary brickwork arch over the railway is suffering, from loss of mortar, spalling of the face of the bricks and separation of the lower course of bricks forming the arch from the rest of the arch. The loss of mortar to some of the brickwork at the ends of the bridge, where this is most exposed to the weather is so severe that some bricks have fallen out, and other very loose bricks have been removed or pinned as a precaution. To reduce the risk of further loose bricks falling off at the edges of the arch, traffic is being kept off these areas.

A structural load carrying assessment has been carried out of the bridge in its current condition. This indicates, with the separation of the lower course of bricks to the arch, that the arch can safely still carry a single lane of unrestricted 40/44 tonne vehicles, down the centre of the bridge. No vehicular loading can safely be carried out near the edges of the bridge, due to the loose bricks here and these sections of the arch having a lower safe load carrying capacity due to the load effects here not being able to be spread out past the edges of the bridge, which concentrates the load effects. These higher load effects will cause greater flexure in the arch which will increase the risk of loose bricks falling off.

Weight restriction signage is often ignored, so is of limited effectiveness, unless supported by physical measures, such as a physical width restriction, typically set at 6'6" which stops all heavy axle vehicles passing, but also stops a large number of modern cars and SUVs from passing.

A weight restriction has been considered as a possible load mitigation measure alternative to narrowing the road but considered to be ineffective for the above reasons and likely to be more disruptive if supplemented by a width restriction to make it more effective. Since the traffic has been restricted to a single lane down the centre of the bridge and it has been structurally assessed to be safe in this condition and there is no evidence to indicate that this is damaging the bridge, there is no justification from a structural point of view for a structural weight restriction at this time.

8. COUNCILLOR BETHIA THOMAS

Several months ago I asked a question to council regarding the use of our public buildings as warm, welcoming safe spaces for members of the public who may be struggling with cost of living this winter – so called ‘warm banks’. Since then I have been working with local community groups in Faringdon to provide a network of warm banks, or, as we like to call them, ‘hotspots’.

During this period Faringdon Library was closed due to refurbishments. It has recently reopened and we were hoping to promote it as our fifth hotspot. The new design is light and airy with plenty of space for people to gather, and has the facilities for people to access the internet or even to use the space for work; in short it is an ideal location for a hotspot, particularly with investment in energy efficient heat pumps which provide a warm space at lower cost, important in the current economic climate.

Given this investment, would the cabinet member be able to confirm that this Faringdon Library will be opened to all as a warm bank, and whether this applies to all the libraries across the county?

COUNCILLOR JENNY HANNABY, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SAFETY

I thank Cllr Thomas for the question and the work of her communities and many other communities across Oxfordshire.

The County Council is very supportive of organisations helping to provide warm and welcoming spaces this winter and reaffirms its commitment to keeping libraries open as warm, welcoming, and safe spaces for the public.

As part of our holistic approach to keeping warm spaces open for residents this winter, the September Cabinet committed £100,000 to a grant round helping community organisations with their own energy costs—the [Community Building Energy Support Scheme](#) (CBESS). This was administered with the help of Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF). This grant round was well publicised and, when it closed, had received over 100 applications. A decision making panel will meet in early December and the Council hopes to work with OCF to provide funding to successful applicants by the end of the calendar year.

This grant round complements another £100,000 which the Council provided to OCF which will help support Oxfordshire’s thriving voluntary and community sector to maintain communities during the cost of living crisis. Again, the Council hopes to work with OCF to provide funding to successful applicants by the end of the calendar year.

Our 44 libraries already offer a range of activities and events to residents and, as always, will continue to be open and welcoming to the public during what we know will be a challenging winter. Additionally, we have recently refurbished the library at Faringdon where the building’s environment is now even more welcoming and comfortable than before. We will continue to publicise opportunities and events in our libraries to residents in the context of the cost of living crisis. We have opted for “Warm Welcome” rather than a specific “warm bank” or “warm space” approach on the basis that it is less stigmatising and more welcoming. We feel it focuses on supporting existing activities and opportunities to avoid loneliness and isolation as well as keeping healthy and well. Residents can also access help and support as well as accessing free wi-fi and open-access PCs.

The Council encourages all organisations offering a warm space or warm welcome to sign up to the national [Warm Welcome Network](#). In Faringdon, the Pump House Project and Open Kitchen project are already signed up and we look forward to seeing more organisations across Oxfordshire signing up. I would encourage all Cllrs working with local communities to provide a network of warm spaces (or, “hotspots”) to sign those spaces up to [the national network](#)..

9. COUNCILLOR GEOFF SAUL

On 15th November 2022 Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet agreed a Policy Statement to ensure that environmental considerations should be placed at the heart of policy decision-making across the County Council. Oxfordshire County Council is the major landholder (at around 60%) of the East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area, an area proposed for development of 1,200 homes, although this may be reduced by recent archaeological finds.

Although the Leader of the Council has talked of achieving “an exemplary scheme” there have been few detailed assurances of what this will entail. With regard to the buildings and dwellings to be built on that part of the development controlled by the County Council, can the Cabinet Member confirm that the development will follow the sustainability principles set out in West Oxfordshire District Council’s recently introduced Sustainability Standards Checklist. In particular, can he commit on behalf of the Council to the adoption of the highest possible standards of energy and sustainable design and specifically that any buildings built on the land controlled by the County Council should:

1. align with net zero-carbon standards and strive to achieve a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for space heating demand of <15kWh/m2.yr comparable to those achieved through Passivhaus.
2. be fossil fuel free
3. have a net zero-operational carbon balance and deliver 100% of energy consumption using renewables
4. Minimise embodied carbon emissions in the development; and
5. Prioritise passive design measures to mitigate overheating risk and optimise thermal comfort

COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

Thank you for your question, Councillor Saul.

You are quite right that this council is committed to protecting the natural environmental and addressing the climate emergency. The proposed development at East Chipping Norton is at an early stage of design and master-planning. The funding and delivery model has also yet to be agreed. Any development that comes forward will fully comply with the West Oxfordshire District Local Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents approved by the Planning Authority.

10. COUNCILLOR NICK LEVERTON

Following a serious incident in Wycombe Way Carterton can I please ask for the Highways Team to ensure a 'Road Safety Audit' of Wycombe Way is carried at the earliest opportunity.

The incident happened at the traffic light controlled crossing in Wycombe Way Carterton. Three Children were involved, two had minor injuries the third Child 'was seriously injured. He suffered life changing injuries and currently is in a critical but stable condition.

This is the second such incident in the recent past and I am asking for the 'Road Safety Audit ' to be carried out to ensure that our signage, road markings and area lighting are fully compliant with our legal obligations !

The members of the public who use this crossing, and there are many, because of the nearby Primary School need to be reassured by us as a Council that the area is fit for purpose. I cannot think of a more deserving case for an urgent response and I would ask that you put your weight behind my request .

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

Officers are aware of the incident and will be working together to undertake a Vulnerable Road User Assessment of the site. Any works that are identified will be picked up by the Accessibility and Road safety Fund where it is deemed necessary.

11. COUNCILLOR DONNA FORD

Can the cabinet member for corporate services please advise what percentage of consultations result in the same action as the consultation response?

COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Unfortunately I am not able to provide a numerical answer to this question for several reasons.

Many of our consultations are qualitative and therefore seek a range of views to inform policy development rather than a binary agree / disagree response to options. This means feedback cannot always be presented in one linear way.

Furthermore our consultations (for example the annual residents survey) frequently measure views on priorities rather than specific proposals. Events such as Oxfordshire Conversations or the recent Citizen's Jury on transport in Oxford demonstrate a wide range of views from different communities which influence and shape our policies and their content rather than reject or endorse them.

The consultation and engagement team work hard to undertake effective consultation in line with the Gunning Principles to ensure quality events and that consultation is a fair and worthwhile activity. We recognise that we need to be clear as possible on what we are consulting on, what aspect people can influence and what other factors affect decisions made through our democratic system.

To help with this, our digital consultation and engagement platform, Let's talk Oxfordshire, will include a brief statement about this in the introduction to each consultation. The consultation and engagement team will also work directly with services to routinely update the 'You said, we did' section on the Let's talk Oxfordshire platform to demonstrate impact.

12. COUNCILLOR TED FENTON

Since its introduction, how many vehicles have paid to drive into the Zero Emissions Zone (or what is the average per day/week/month - whatever figures are available)? How much has been raised in charges and to what use has the revenue been put?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

The ZEZ scheme generates income from the following two sources:

- payments of daily ZEZ charges for using a vehicle in the zone
- payments of penalty charge notices that are issued for non-payment of ZEZ charges that are due.

The scheme has been live for enforcement since 28 February 2022. Revenue received from charges and fines up to 30 November 2022 is:

Charges:	£255,079
Fines:	£247,038
Total:	£502,117

Approximately 51,000 daily ZEZ charges have been paid since the scheme went live. On average, approximately 6,000 daily ZEZ charges are paid each month.

ZEZ income can only be used to cover the costs of setting up and running the scheme and, if there's a surplus once these costs have been covered, to facilitate the achievement of its local transport policies.

In the ZEZ "charging order", which is the legal document (published on our ZEZ website) that makes the ZEZ enforceable, the council has outlined the kinds of transport improvements we'd like to fund. This includes schemes to support the transition to zero emission transport, such as electric vehicle charging points or active travel schemes. The ZEZ is still relatively new and we don't yet know what the surplus will be. However, as soon as this becomes clearer we'll provide more information about how any surplus will be used to support the objectives of the ZEZ.

13. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

Can the Cabinet member for Corporate Services confirm what payments, if any, have been made by members to private limited companies (as more particularly defined in s. 3 of the Companies Act 2006) under the Councillors Priority Fund ('CPF') and advise how, if at all, such payments are compliant with CPF rules

COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Following an internal review of Councillor Priority Fund payments since the scheme started, there have been two instances of payments made to private companies. These are:

Year	Organisation	Total Awarded	Project
20/21	IM23 Ltd	£4415	'We Grow Microfarm' A project that works through social enterprise principles to look into the use of farming technology to create climate sensitive, and high and fast yield food. The initial yields were to be donated to Didcot and Wantage Food Banks.
21/22	Pedal & Pour Ltd (Pedal & Post)	£4500	'Bike Aid' An eTrike and fully trained rider to provide low carbon free deliveries to charities in Oxford, including delivery of Oxford Mutual Aid food parcels to vulnerable households. The project was match funded by Pedal & Pour.

Whilst payments were awarded to private companies, I am satisfied that the projects remain in line with the purpose and parameters of the Councillor Priority Fund. Furthermore, the Council has been in touch with both projects and can confirm the outcomes of the 'Bike Aid' project have been achieved. We are awaiting an update on the outcomes of the 'We Grow Microfarm' project.

<p>14. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES</p> <p>How much public money has been spent on (i) setting up and (ii) repairing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to date?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The cost of setting up and installing the LTNs was £143,340.27. The cost at the time of writing (28.11.22) of repairing LTN filter sites and making safe/repairing/replacing damaged bollards, signs and planters is a total of £72,628.41</p>
<p>15. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES</p> <p>What provisions will be made for low-paid public servants, such as Teaching Assistants, local government workers and hospital support staff, in connection with the Workplace Parking Levy?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) is still a measure that the council is committed to but not before further work on the details and a separate consultation is carried out. It is therefore not possible to say what provisions will be made for any sector of society at this stage. The Secretary of State will need to give approval for the WPL once the final scheme has been agreed.</p>

16. COUNCILLOR TED FENTON

As refuse and recycling contracts in West Oxfordshire and other Districts approach renewal dates what involvement, if any, does Oxfordshire County Council as the disposal authority have in helping to design collection services so that the already good recycling rate in the County can be improved further? Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the way to encourage recycling is to make it as simple as possible for residents?

COUNCILLOR PETE SADBURY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY AND ENVIRONMENT

Oxfordshire County Council, as Waste Disposal Authority, works closely with the City and District authorities as Waste Collection Authorities, through the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership (ORWP). Together ORWP work to implement our Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy whose three main aims are to prevent waste growth, increase recycling rates and reduce waste to landfill.

The waste industry is currently awaiting the response to three consultations released by the Government in 2021, and these will be the biggest factor in determining what collection system should be implemented. The changing legislation aims to introduce consistency across household recycling collections. This may require specific materials to be collected separately (paper and glass in separate containers for example) to improve the quality of the materials collected. The amount of funding received by LA will be dependant upon their systems complying with the new requirements, and therefore without more certainty it is difficult for any local authority to effectively plan, at the moment.

Waste Collection Authorities will design their own collection systems accounting for their local circumstances (for example the needs of a rural authority are different from an urban) and other factors, including their budget. While the final decision is down to Members in that district, officers work with County and other ORWP partners to ensure systems are compatible with longstanding contractual arrangements and deliver on our joint aims of preventing waste growth and increasing recycling rates.

17. COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON

Can you confirm the increase in the amount of funding since COVID for rural bus services in West Oxfordshire and does OCC have any power to influence or persuade StageCoach from cancelling bus services (such as in Brize Norton).

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

In the financial year 2019/20, the Council funded or part-funded five bus routes in West Oxfordshire at a cost of £378,541. All five bus routes were funded exclusively by Section 106 arrangements with developers.

In the financial year 2022/23, it is estimated that the Council will fund or part-fund thirteen bus routes at a total cost of £1,169,209, an increase of 309% over three years. Six of these are funded by Section 106 arrangements, five from a budget created to protect non-commercial bus services post-Covid, one exclusively from Government recovery funds and one from a mix of the above.

The Council works closely with bus operators to secure the best network possible, but it does not have the power to force operators to provide unremunerative services. The Government mandated a network sustainability review be undertaken by all local authorities in summer 2022, recognising that it is vital bus operators remain financially secure. The forthcoming Enhanced Partnership will develop relationships with bus operators further, allowing both parties to play to their strengths to improve viability and protect as much of the network as possible.

18. COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON

I am disappointed with the extremely slow progress in the HGV routes review for Oxfordshire. Little progress seems to have been made. Can you give a detailed timetable for how this will progress in 2023 and when we will see some recommendations.

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

I too am very keen to see this progress, as it will hopefully bring relief to communities (particularly on rural roads) as well as providing more efficient and reliable routes with better facilities for freight and those who move it around. Work has been ongoing to commission consultants to undertake the area weight restriction work following the adoption of the Freight and Logistics Strategy in July 2022. Commissioning is now complete and work due to start this month. The work will be conducted in three phases: data gathering and local member / parish council / stakeholder engagement, development of the approach, and reporting. It is planned that the work will be complete, and recommendations produced by the end of March 2023

19. COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON

Can Cllr Enright give the Full Council more details on the postponement of work on improving the A40 due to "cost pressures". Can you expand on what this means and how long the postponement is intended - given the urgency to improve the A40 and the traffic flows on it.

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Oxfordshire County Council remains fully committed to the A40 Programme and to delivering long-term transport solutions for the area.

In light of the global inflationary pressures being experienced in all sectors, the Programme Team - incorporating external market analysis - conducted a detailed review of the scheme in late 2022. The review included looking at costs and timelines, and calculating the implications of unprecedented inflation. As a result of this review, cost pressures have been identified that result in the forecast scheme costs exceeding the current budget.

The decision was therefore made to withdraw the statutory orders (CPO and SRO) from the ongoing statutory process to allow further time to consider mitigations to these cost pressures.

Work that was due to commence in summer 2023 will be deferred and resequenced as part of a further review of the programme. The previously agreed scope will be re-evaluated and modified to a revised set of requirements that enables the council to achieve its objectives for growth and development whilst delivering on initiatives that help ease congestion and improve journey time reliability for buses. The review will consider the best way to deliver the scheme within the current budget.

The council is working with funding partners to identify the long-term implications for the scheme as quickly as possible. A full project update will be provided to Cabinet in early 2023.

20. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES

Residents all over Oxford, but particularly living along the Abingdon Road and Thames Street have expressed grave concern about the potential impacts to congestion, air pollution and local bus services as a result of displaced traffic from the closure of Botley Road. There is a pressing need for the Council to take urgent action. What significant plans are in place to tackle displaced traffic, ensure bus prioritisation and achieve modal shift as a result of the closure of the railway-end of Botley Road from the 9th January 2023 to 15th December 2023?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

Officers from the Network Coordination Team are working with colleagues, key stakeholders and Network Rail on these issues in preparation for the closure in 2023. A number of suggestions have been made on how to best mitigate for buses during the closure which are being considered by Officers. Officers have also arranged a workshop on 15 December 2022 to discuss these and determine the art of the possible, effect on the network, costs and potential timings of any mitigations, taking into account legal and consultation requirements. Specific to the closure, there are already Variable Messaging Signs (VMS) advertising the closure and we are working with Network Rail on a traffic management plan for the advanced signing of the diversion routes as well as bus mitigations for services using Botley Road.

21. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES

The School Streets scheme in Oxford and Abingdon has been a great success despite significant delay, providing Oxfordshire examples of how School Streets offer the potential to transform how kids travel to school by providing safe, clean routes to school and an effective nudge to change behaviour. Recently, Chris Boardman (Active Travel Commissioner for England) visited Kesgrave High School in Ipswich where 89% of children walk or wheel to school. Oxfordshire needs this ambition for our schools.

Momentum is building for School Streets, with extensive, systematic roll outs in numerous authorities. Wandsworth has announced 16 new schemes, joining their 21 school streets already in place. Croydon, with its Conservative Mayor, have unveiled 10 new schemes on top of the 43 permanent schemes in place. Hackney has delivered 48 permanent schemes in all, 40 since 2020 alone.

In recognition of the need for ambition, will the Cabinet Member agree with me that it is essential that extensive numbers of new ANPR backed School Street schemes are promptly brought forward, funded as part of this current budget round? Officers should not be having to write up a new business case to get internal buy-in, when we know they work.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

The Council would like to thank the volunteers for the on-going support they have given to the phase 1 school street project and look forward to the ANPR cameras going live in the new year, this will be a major step forward for the project as Oxfordshire County Council are one of the 1st councils outside of London to use them in this way.

Council officers are working to develop a further round of Schools streets with a number of schools that have expressed an interest in taking part in the scheme, due to the nature of the Department for Transport grant funding to support this project, it is necessary to produce a business case to support allow for the drawdown of the funding.

22. COUNCILLOR BRAD BAINES

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that this Administration have no intentions of selling off (new) County Hall, our most valuable and visible asset and workspace, as part of estate consolidation plans in line with the Property Strategy?

COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

Thank you for your question, Cllr Baines.

Work is due to be commissioned to look at our operational accommodation in the new year and at this stage no decisions have been made regarding County Hall. The building is indeed a visible and valuable asset and part of it is listed. However, it is also one of our worst buildings in terms of environmental performance and in need of significant investment to bring it up to modern standards in terms of both quality and the requirements of a modern workplace fit for our staff and colleagues.

Members will be aware that I have called together a cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group to explore the options relating to our city centre accommodation to further understand the costs and opportunities associated with revitalising our buildings. The recently adopted property strategy does commit us to a city centre headquarters with local hubs, recognising the combination of city, town and rural communities across our county.

23. COUNCILLOR TED FENTON

To what extent is OCC able to respond positively to the requests from Carterton Community College (the last remaining LEA secondary school in Oxfordshire) for funding for essential structural improvements to the fabric of the school."

COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

The funding administered within OCC for structural works in local authority maintained schools is the Department for Education's Schools' Conditions Allocation. In OCC we run a School Structural Maintenance Programme (SSMP) with the fund. Carterton Community College has recently benefited from an allocation of just under £135k to improve a felt covered flat roof and £120k to upgrade the fire alarm. The 2022/23 Programme priorities have already been approved.

The Council has recently embarked on an exercise with an external surveying company to have conditions surveys completed by 31 March on all maintained schools. When that work is completed we can reassess the programme taking account of the up to date conditions surveys.

24. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON

Many organisations and employers prohibit the consumption of alcohol during the working day for reasons of safety and competency.

Members of this council have a huge responsibility to residents and the wider community. We make decisions on issues that will impact the whole county, involving a total budget of over £1bn, including large sums of tax-payers money.

It's expected that we will take those obligations seriously and set an example to others. To do so we need to remain clear-headed and competent during council meetings to consider seriously, coherently and respectfully the matters put before us.

Does the leader agree with me that the consumption of alcohol by members on working days before and during periods when we are attending council meetings could be seen as contrary to those expectations and so should be discouraged?

COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

When I was first elected to this council, wine was provided for councillors at lunchtime. A decision to stop serving wine was taken following a motion to Council from the opposition. I believe that this was the right decision and I agree that the drinking of alcohol by councillors during our lunch breaks should be discouraged.

<p>25. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Can the cabinet member confirm if this council will be removing parking charges at our P&R sites to help support the local economy over the festive period?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>We are now operating a discounted combined Park & Bus journey ticket, which will enable an adult and up to three children to travel on a return journey to the site for just £4 (£1.20 parking + £2.80 return bus journey) and £5 for two adults and up to three children. The general parking fee remains at a cost of £2. However, we have extended the time period from 1 hour – 12 hours for that cost to that of 1-16 hours to provide a service more suited to the needs of users. It is free to park at any Park & Ride site on Christmas day, which will prove useful for local residents hosting family and friends.</p> <p>Might I suggest Cllr Walker speaks with his Conservative colleagues in Government about providing more funding for buses, and more powers for councils, to allow this sort of option and other creative ideas for improving public transport to be considered in future</p>
<p>26. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Given the coalition has now paused improvement work to the A40 in West Oxfordshire, can he confirm that Shores Green junction improvements will still be going ahead?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>A40 Access to Witney at Shores Green Junction is a standalone scheme proposed to enable traffic from northeast Witney to travel west on the A40 toward Burford without travelling through the town centre and Bridge Street which falls within Air Quality management Area.</p> <p>The scheme remains unaffected by the pause implemented on the A40 Improvement Programme west of Oxfordshire, and OCC remains committed to its delivery.</p>

27. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER

Witney residents are waiting to hear from the county council about the consultation and engagement process on how nearly £2million will be spent on Witney High Street. These meetings were planned to take place in the Autumn. When will these meetings now take place given that deadline has been missed?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

I speak to Witney residents every day, and I am perfectly aware of our shared desire to make Witney High Street an even more beautiful and vibrant place. That's why I am pleased we have already begun the process of involving local stakeholders in discussions about the future of the High Street, starting with the Chamber of Commerce back in the summer. Further meetings with stakeholders and a public engagement exercise will be undertaken to inform the next phase of design for this scheme to ensure that the available funding is targeted at appropriate interventions in accordance with community need and expectations. Meetings with stakeholders will be scheduled for the New Year with public engagement anticipated to follow in Spring 2023. I am delighted that both Witney Town Council and West Oxfordshire District Council have indicated their willingness to be involved and assist wherever possible, and the beautifully restored and refitted Corn Exchange has been offered as the venue for events.

<p>28. COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN</p> <p>On at least two occasions, members of this council have heard quite eloquently from residents across the County who are likely to have their livelihoods destroyed by a 'stroke of the pen' given that the Liberal / Labour / Green alliance insist on pursuing the traffic filters at the expense of all other health and economic concerns. Will the leader take the opportunity to offer an apology to those people, including families and small independent traders that have for so long made up much of Oxford's character, whose viable businesses will be rendered anything but, once these measures take affect?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>We have had a traffic filter on the High Street in Oxford for many years, and there is no evidence that businesses there have been adversely affected by the lack of car traffic. During the period of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order we will monitor the effects of the filters in other parts of the city, and we will use that data to inform future decisions.</p>
<p>29. COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN</p> <p>At the last council meeting this Council head from parents, rightly concerned about the process for EHC plans. Whilst decisions made won't always be popular, it is alarming to hear such numbers of residents raise queries over the process. Has the deputy leader, in her capacity as the relevant portfolio holder, met with any of those who raised concerns since and if not, why not?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES</p> <p>Yes</p>

30. COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN

After the last council meeting a baseless insinuation was made from a member of the Cabinet that members of the opposition were drunk. At the request of the monitoring officer, this baseless, malicious and factually incorrect accusation was withdrawn. However, that has not stopped members of the administration, on multiple occasions, without any proof, regularly suggesting both in person and online that members of the opposition continue to be intoxicated by alcohol on a regular basis while performing their democratically elected duties. Does the leader regret that the Cabinet have allowed such a culture to exist, and will she agree with me that making such baseless and false accusations for 'the fun of it' falls well short of the standards expected in public life?

COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Bearder posted a clip from the recording of the last council meeting on his Twitter account. A complaint was received from the Leader of the Opposition about use of this clip as it showed members of the opposition, and Cllr Bearder agreed to take it down. To the best of my knowledge no further complaints have been received by the Monitoring Officer and I am not aware of any accusations of the sort referenced by Cllr Fatemian being made by any member of the Alliance

31. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON

In a 13-minute promotional video on the Oxford bus filters played at public meetings, in which the Cabinet member for Finance spoke. It claimed that they would make Oxfordshire "more prosperous". On what economic and/or commercial data was this claim based

COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

Thank you for your question, Cllr Snowdon.

You refer to a video in which I gave an interview as the councillor for Otmoor, not in my capacity as cabinet member for finance. If we are going to ask each other about every statement we make as councillors in video or social media, Council meetings might get considerably longer! Nevertheless, I am more than happy to answer your question.

A prosperous community is one in which residents prosper. We can measure that across their health and wellbeing as well as financial benefit to them and to society. The traffic filters will bring about changes that reduce levels of air pollution, make it easier to cycle and walk, and speed up travel times on buses. In turn these will make us more prosperous by improving public health, increasing economic productivity and reducing the future costs of climate change impacts. Paragraph 30 of the cabinet report of 29 November listed many of the forecast benefits as a result of the introduction of the traffic filters. These include:

- reduce NO2 concentrations (Nitrogen Dioxide) along 76% of assessed roads and at 91% of existing monitoring locations, with the scheme not resulting in any exceedances of national air quality objectives
- reduce CO2 (carbon dioxide) emissions by 6%
- reduce road casualties by around 34 per year, of which over half would be reduced cycle casualties
- increase cycling and walking trips by around 10%

You request references. In a 2018 UKHSA summary¹, Prof. Sir Chris Whitty and co-authors cite estimates of the cost to the UK of poor air quality: "The Environment Audit Committee has estimated that total health costs as a result of air pollution range between £8.5 billion and £20.2 billion a year." Calculations produced by the Department for Transport² in 2021 valued the prevention of a road traffic death at £2.11million, and the prevention of a serious accident at £238,000 and the prevention of a slight accident at £18,300. Transport for London (TfL) has produced research³ on the benefits of cycling and walking: to individuals and to the economy. It points out that those who are physically active take 27% fewer sick days per year than less active co-workers. Evidence in the same TfL report states that those who walk and cycle to local shopping areas (typically high streets) take twice as many trips as those who drive and spend up to 40% more than those who travel by car. The Dutch Cycling Vision⁴ gives estimates of the annual cost of having a bicycle of 300 Euros, compared to 8,500 Euros for running a car.

I appreciate that change brings uncertainty and concern and that forecasts of impact are not an exact science. However, those who have examined the evidence have provided very strong grounds to believe that the traffic filters will help to increase the prosperity of residents in Oxford city through the benefits of a fairer, greener and healthier transport system

<p>32. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>If the bus gates and associated restrictions approved by Cabinet on 29 November prove successful, there will be fewer cars on the road in Oxford City. How will the Cabinet member for Transport and Development Strategy ensure that HGVs do not then start rat-running on such roads where they are shown by sat-nav systems as constituting the fastest route between the Midlands and the South of England?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>Our modelling work suggests that HGVs diverting through the city to avoid congestion on the A34 once the trial traffic filters are introduced will not be a regular occurrence. This is not least because congestion on the A34 would need to be very severe to make the route through the city centre a more attractive one from a journey time perspective. Having said that, the numbers of HGVs going through the traffic filter points is something that we will be monitoring once the trial begins. This is the whole point of trialling the traffic filters – the monitoring will be used to review the scheme and allow changes to be made if needed. Work on planning the next steps for the freight and logistics strategy, which includes 47 proposed actions including appropriate routing, reviewing rest stops and parking facilities for drivers, and area-based weight restrictions is underway. Our team expect to publish details soon and would welcome the involvement of councillors, parish and town councils, our city and district partner councils and community groups in making this work for everyone.</p>
<p>33. COUNCILLOR KIERON MALLON</p> <p>Does the Leader regret the events that led to the presence of security guards armed with tasers at County Hall on 29 November and will she ensure that residents' concerns in consultation responses are not dismissed as "irrelevant" and, further, that controversial plans of this kind are in future more fully consulted upon?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>We were advised that a group of people from outside the County were planning to attend on November 29th. In order to ensure the safety of people at the Cabinet meeting, we engaged a team of security staff. None of them carried tasers, or any other form of weapon. However, because of the disturbance caused by these visitors, police arrived on the scene and I understand that some of them may have been armed. Everyone who requested an opportunity to speak at the meeting was able to, and their representations and those of people who responded to the consultation were considered by the Cabinet in arriving at their decision.</p>

<p>34. COUNCILLOR LES SIBLEY</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member provide any update or news on any possible alternative funding options, timelines, or meeting dates regarding the A4095 Howes Lane Bicester - realignment project?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>We are aware that the current proposal for an alignment for the A4095 differs from the one that has planning permission and is shown in the North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document. Whilst preapplication discussions have been held, neither Oxfordshire County council nor Cherwell District Council has given support to this alternative alignment. Any alternative proposal will require a formal planning application to be made to Cherwell District Council.</p> <p>Funding options are still being actively pursued by both councils to enable the delivery of the permitted scheme.</p>
<p>35. COUNCILLOR ROBIN BENNETT</p> <p>Recently, a young child was hit by a car turning into Thame Lane while approaching the Europa School in Culham. Thankfully the child was not badly hurt this time, but the difficulty and danger of crossing the roads around the school is prohibiting parents from using active travel. Can you confirm the planned dates for installation of the much-anticipated safe crossing of the A415 at the Tollgate Road junction, which is due to be funded by developer contributions, and whether this work can include making the adjacent junction at Thame Lane safe for children approaching the Europa school?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers are aware of the requirement for a crossing at this location. This is a large scheme that needs full funding before being developed beyond a design. The scheme will require cross party working within the authority to ensure any measures that are installed meet all of the requirements of the local road users.</p> <p>At the present time the authority does not have sufficient funding to implement the crossing (even with the section 106 contribution).</p>

36. COUNCILLOR ROBIN BENNETT

Residents in my division wishing to comment on the HIF1 planning application can only view the many newly-added documents by appointment at County Hall, or online. They can pay £100 to have some of the documents sent by post, but I understand this does not include the maps, which are in some cases hard to view online on a standard browser. While the costs to print multiples of the documentation are prohibitive, is there any way of having these on display in a more accessible location, even if only on specific dates?

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Following liaison between the HIF1 team and the planning authority, the HIF1 team will deposit a full paper copy of the recent Regulation 25 submission in Didcot for a fixed period of time, likely to be from the 15th to 20th December. These documents will be available for anyone to view, without the need for an appointment, either at the Didcot Civic Centre or the library (to be confirmed). Final details of the location and timings will be added to the website (the HIF1 page) in the next few days

37. COUNCILLOR ROBIN BENNETT

A community charity in my division, Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre, a tenant of OCC, is having to close due to lack of funds. According to the Charities Aid Foundation, charities are facing a triple threat of soaring demands, falling donations and rising costs. Many of our charities and community groups provide vital support to residents; is there more we can do as a council to support these organisations in the coming months?

COUNCILLOR MARK LYGO, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND EQUALITIES

I thank Cllr Bennett for the question and would like to take this opportunity to thank all of Oxfordshire's voluntary, community, and charity organizations for all the hard work they have done and continue to do to help our residents. I am also aware of the pressures and demands facing such organizations in the context of the cost of living crisis and reiterate Oxfordshire County Council's ongoing support for them. In recognition of the fact that energy costs are rising, the September Cabinet committed £100,000 to a grant round helping community organizations with their own energy costs this winter—the [Community Building Energy Support Scheme](#) (CBESS). This hopes to ensure that community organisations are able to continue offering support to residents this winter. This was administered with the help of Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF). This grant round was well publicised and, when it closed, had received over 130 applications. A decision making panel met in early December and the Council hopes to work with OCF to provide funding to successful applicants by the end of the calendar year. This grant round complements another £100,000 which the Council provided to OCF which will help support Oxfordshire's thriving voluntary and community sector to maintain communities during the cost of living crisis. This grant round intended to help our community sector meet immediate crisis demand for essentials, provide advice and personalised support, develop preventative solutions, create super-local community hubs, and promote our wide range of services to residents. Again, the Council hopes to work with OCF to provide funding to successful applicants by the end of the calendar year. In addition, the Council has made £500,000 available via the Community Capacity Grant to support grass roots organisations in Oxfordshire for projects that promote independence and wellbeing within local communities - www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/communitycapacitygrants. Adult Social Care has made this funding available to support vulnerable adults to stay connected in their communities. The Community Capacity Grants recognise the value which grass roots organisations bring to Oxfordshire and the need to invest in the wealth of local expertise, knowledge and connections they bring. They have been designed in collaboration with health, voluntary sector and city and district partners. These grants are being administered by Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) and Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF). The grants opened on 11th October 2022 and organisations from across Oxfordshire can apply for a grant. Grants range from the smaller Connected Community Funding which offers a maximum of £5,000, to larger formal grants with a potential £20,000 available per programme. In further recognition of the challenges that our community, charity, and voluntary organisations face, especially as they emerge from lockdown, Cabinet granted a rent holiday for 18 VCS organisations for the current financial year (2022/23). This amounted to a total of £116,000 of rent concession. In addition, given that VCS organisations face increasing operational costs, particularly utilities and cost of living, a further year's concession has been granted to 17 organisations. The rent holiday and the many grant rounds outlined above form part of our broader strategy for the voluntary and community sector. We see the Council's role as supporting and empowering our voluntary and community sector to do what they do best, working in partnership together along the way. That is why in July this year we published our Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy, with a vision to enable a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector across Oxfordshire, to help deliver positive change for our communities. Over the next five years, the strategy commits to increasing and building the skills and capacity of the sector, including through continuing to invest in VCS Infrastructure, as well as exploring ways to better support the sustainability of the sector. This strategy reflects how, as a council, we appreciate and value the critical work the local VCS does across Oxfordshire and see first-hand the positive impact this has on residents and communities.

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