

## CABINET – 21 MARCH 2023

### ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p><b>1. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member look into expediting Warwick Road onto the resurfacing highway schedule from Orchard Way to the traffic lights at Southam Road where its condition continues to decline? From interaction with highway officers it could be till late 2024/2025 until funding is available to resurface the road. This poses a health and safety concern to cyclists and general traffic using the road.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>Investigation work on this scheme is due to take place shortly, with design work planned during the course of 23/24, making it difficult to bring this scheme forward. This preparation work will look at making sure the right treatment is selected and that the whole life cost from a financial and carbon perspective is understood. The current proposal is for this scheme to be delivered in 24/25, however, we will continue to keep the road safe in the interim by repairing any safety defects in line with our road safety inspection policy through regular monitoring.</p>
<p><b>2. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</b></p> <p>Last November at Cabinet I asked about whether attendance records for councillors could be made public. Will it be possible to introduce such a scheme from the start of the new municipal year this May?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Member attendance data are available on the software used to manage the Council's public meetings and we are in discussions with the software providers with regard to how to present the data on the public website. We will start to do that from May.</p>
<p><b>3. COUNCILLOR CHARLIE HICKS</b></p> <p>Active Travel England have recently published the active travel capability ratings for Local Authorities across England and Oxfordshire County Council is rated as 2 out of 4, with the next rating happening in Summer 2023. This</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>These ratings were agreed last year – following self-assessment [we assessed ourselves as a level 3 at that time] this was then moderated down to a level 2 by Active Travel England.</p>

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<p>rating affects how much funding Local Authorities receive from Active Travel England, who have stated as a headline message that "working with ambitious councils is at the heart of everything we do". Councils with higher ratings are in line to receive more funds.</p> <p>To become a Level 3 Local Authority on Active Travel Capability, we need to meet the criteria of: "Very strong local leadership, comprehensive plans, and a significant network in place with a growing number of people choosing to walk, wheel and cycle"</p> <p>Does he agree with me that we should be doing everything we can to achieve a Level 3 rating from Active Travel England in the next rating round in summer 2023 (especially as we are hosting a key national active travel conference this year)? And if he does agree with me on this, please can he outline what steps are being taken to maximise our chances of a Level 3 rating, including whether the opportunity is being taken in the current E&amp;P department restructure to help get Oxfordshire County Council to the Level 3 definition this summer?</p>	<p>We are very clear that we would consider ourselves pushing for a level 3 and have the opportunity to do so when these ratings are reassessed in the summer. Most '3' rated authorities – there are only 5 in the country – are larger metropolitan combined authorities, with Nottingham and Leicester the other two. So in addition to setting out how we have developed and improved over the last year (including our Active Travel network investment programme and supporting Behaviour Change activity) we are looking at what they have been doing to achieve this rating.</p> <p>As far as restructure goes, we are very clear that the need and opportunity to Transform Environment &amp; Place is firmly linked to achieving the Council's priorities including Active Travel.</p>
<p><b>4. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member urgently, investigate safety measures such as a lower speed limit for the stretch of road around house numbers in the 170s Warwick Road, Banbury where there have been recent road collisions with parked cars causing concern to local residents?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>In view of the number of incidents reported I have asked officers to review the possibility of introducing traffic calming measures and/or adjustments to the parking arrangements. If deemed to be feasible, funding would need to be identified to enable such proposals to be designed and taken to consultation. Alongside this a reduction in speed limit to 20mph could be considered as part of the Banbury speed limit review.</p>

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<p data-bbox="219 220 741 248"><b>5. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</b></p> <p data-bbox="219 331 1055 624">The Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford United Football Club land negotiations: engagement and communications strategy appears not to include a focused local consultation with residents in my division in Kidlington or those in Cllr Gant’s division of Wolvercote &amp; Summertown who will be directly affected by the siting of a football stadium on green belt land owned by the County Council at the Triangle site in Kidlington.</p> <p data-bbox="219 667 1055 954">The only reference to such an exercise appears to be “an open engagement where anyone can share feedback using an online response form; email and letters will also be accepted”. This seems similar to the process that was carried out last year which captured responses from the entire country and beyond with no reliable mechanism to ascertain if the respondents lived in the local area or even in Oxfordshire.</p> <p data-bbox="219 997 1055 1364">Given that residents in my and Cllr Gant's divisions could be living with any development for many decades to come, will Cllr Miller please confirm that the engagement and communications strategy will incorporate a separate and geographically verifiable consultation exercise with the residents of Kidlington, Gosford, Wolvercote and Cutteslowe as soon as possible, which will include the opportunity for respondents to say if they support the principle of the leasing or sale of the Triangle site to OUFC?</p>	<p data-bbox="1093 220 1944 284"><b>COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</b></p> <p data-bbox="1093 331 2040 587">Thank you for your question, which reflects your close engagement with this scheme, and follows from the previous questions you have raised. The engagement and communications strategy is set out in the Cabinet paper. It includes a clear commitment to direct and independently facilitated engagement with stakeholder groups, including local community groups. We are planning to hold these sessions in April.</p> <p data-bbox="1093 630 2040 1145">We have also set aside six weeks for independently conducted public engagement which will take place when OUFC have provided information to OCC regarding how the strategic priorities identified by Cabinet will be addressed by their proposals. Likely timeframes for this have been published within the 21 March Cabinet report. This exercise will enable responses to be analysed on a geographic basis. Our previous engagement also enabled geographic differentiation and was supported by a programme of targeted communications to encourage participation by those local to the proposed site. We have reflected this in our work to date, noting in our January Cabinet report the difference between local views and wider views regarding the broader Stratfield Brake proposals. Indeed, this is one of the factors that has shaped our engagement with OUFC on the smaller, Triangle site.</p> <p data-bbox="1093 1189 2040 1332">The Cabinet has also set out our willingness to receive feedback in any form, including feedback in the form of letters, emails and commentary in online forms. Respondents are welcome to express any and all views, supportive or otherwise.</p> <p data-bbox="1093 1375 2040 1437">In my discussions with parish councils prior to the Cabinet report considered in January 2023, I made clear that we would value</p>

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	<p>greatly their informed responses to OUFC's proposals when these are published. It is not for me to say how the parish councils should represent the views of local residents. However, were the parish councils to consider undertaking their own local engagement, I would welcome this. Also, reflecting feedback from the parish councils, we have ensured that a six-week window (avoiding the peak period of summer holiday) has been factored in to accommodate this activity. The Cabinet will consider any feedback provided by the parishes as part of the decision-making process.</p>
<p><b>6. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</b></p> <p>The fundamental reason for the council entering into negotiations with OUFC is their assertion that they have no choice but to leave their existing home as their licence to occupy the Kassam stadium will end in 2026 and they have no legal right to renew.</p> <p>Cllr Miller confirmed in the January meeting of the cabinet that the licence end date had been verified. However, there is an option for the club to challenge the status of their licence in the courts and make a claim that their long term occupation of the Kassam stadium gives them the same legal protections as a lease under the Landlord and Tenant Act, including security of tenure and the automatic right to renew. There is already ample legal precedent for this which I have provided details of to Cllr Miller and officers.</p> <p>Given that it's now well over a year since the club first approached the council saying that they had exhausted all legal avenues to remain at the Kassam, and that it's now a further 2 months on since I requested clarification on this</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. As I explained when you asked at Cabinet in January, officers have received information from OUFC setting out the position with regards to the club's occupancy of Kassam Stadium: a description of this position was set out in the Cabinet report in January 2023. Further to this, officers understand that avenues have been previously explored with the City Council to resolve this issue.</p> <p>At the request of Cabinet, council officers are presently in the process of undertaking further due diligence with regards to all finance and legal matters, and this will be presented to Cabinet in a timely fashion in order to inform decision making. I have shared your points with officers and asked that they be raised with OUFC as part of this process.</p> <p>The County Council is planning to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OUFC, any misrepresentation of the position regarding the Kassam would be a breach of the commitments set out in the MOU and would call into question progress with any negotiations.</p>

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<p>point, can Cllr Miller please confirm that the club has been asked for and has provided evidence that they have sought to protect their own interests by making such a legal challenge on the status of their existing licence, and if not, why not?</p>	
<p><b>7. COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS</b></p> <p>In relation to item 16, can I be assured that serious consideration is given to the options of framework and multiple contracts?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The option of frameworks has been considered and, as can be seen from the recommendation in the report to Cabinet, the use of frameworks is part of that recommendation.</p>