

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

1. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON	COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES																						
<p>Will the Cabinet Member publish the amount of redundancy payments made by the council for each financial year between 2012-13 and 2022-23?</p>	<p>Information on exit packages including redundancy costs, pension contributions in respect of added years and costs of early retirements without actuarial reduction in benefits, ex-gratia payments and other departure costs for all services provided by the Council, including maintained schools, are set out annually in the statement of accounts. The total cost of exit packages in each year since 2012/13 to 2022/23 per the statement of accounts is listed below.</p>																						
<p>Supplementary Can the Cabinet Member think of any other examples where the previous administration added to the misery of local residents on top of the reduction in services that come from</p>	<table data-bbox="898 711 1173 1118"><tbody><tr><td>2012/13</td><td>£2.945m</td></tr><tr><td>2013/14</td><td>£1.469m</td></tr><tr><td>2014/15</td><td>£3.548m</td></tr><tr><td>2015/16</td><td>£2.623m</td></tr><tr><td>2016/17</td><td>£2.610m</td></tr><tr><td>2017/18</td><td>£1.971m</td></tr><tr><td>2018/19</td><td>£1.356m</td></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>£1.328m</td></tr><tr><td>2020/21</td><td>£1.775m</td></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>£1.276m</td></tr><tr><td>2022/23</td><td>£1.140m</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Response I agree that the sooner we get rid of this Tory Government the better.</p>	2012/13	£2.945m	2013/14	£1.469m	2014/15	£3.548m	2015/16	£2.623m	2016/17	£2.610m	2017/18	£1.971m	2018/19	£1.356m	2019/20	£1.328m	2020/21	£1.775m	2021/22	£1.276m	2022/23	£1.140m
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<p>the Government's savage cuts to the funding of local authorities such as Oxfordshire?</p>	
<p>2. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</p> <p>What are the implications for the County Council of the government's recent announcement about the future of Local Enterprise Partnerships?</p> <p>Supplementary Will the County Council look to create enterprise in the areas with the higher rate of claimants in the 16 to 24 year old category when any plans are put forward by the LEP when it comes under the full control of the authority?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I can confirm that a county-wide senior transition working group has been established to consider the implications of the direction from Government to transfer the "functions" of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) to upper tier Authorities. I am representing the County Council on this group and the Chief Executive and officer colleagues are working directly with the LEP, Districts and all key partners to ensure an effective transition, which will meet the needs of Oxfordshire.</p> <p>We are required to prepare a transition plan by the 31st March 2024 and the intention is to develop this plan for consideration by the LEP Board in early December 2023, before taking a working group recommendation into the Councils decision-making process from January 2024.</p> <p>Response What you're emphasizing is how inequality across this county can be mapped and we have to make sure that all our young people in this country have the opportunity to go forward and find themselves jobs. And we need to look at those specific areas and indeed we are looking specifically at the areas where we know there are pockets of inequality and we are very conscious of the fact that we need to do more in this county and we're working with partners to do that. One of the things we can do with our new association with the LEP is to look at apprenticeships bringing those forward.</p> <p>We have got a great apprenticeship scheme in this Council we want to make sure that other people are involved in bringing forward apprenticeships. I know the LEP has done a lot of work on that. But that's something that I think we need to focus on as a county in the future because we need to provide young people.</p>

	<p>with the opportunities that they need, the housing that they need, and we will be working with our partners in the district and the city councils in order to bring this forward.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</p> <p>What was the outcome of the recent Ofsted/CQC visit to the county?</p> <p>Supplementary I wonder if you can tell me when the Education Commission, which is going to scrutiny committee on Thursday, is likely to be published?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>Ofsted will be publishing the report on Friday September 15th.</p> <p>Response (from Councillor Brighouse) The report will be published today.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>As a county councillor for Banbury Ruscote, I have received resident concerns about speeding by vehicles on The Fairway Road, And Cromwell Road these roads are already 20MPH zones. Although, I will raise with Thames valley police.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Highway Management investigate the possibility of improving the signage in the location and possible funding for traffic calming to allay fears of residence of a possible serious accident?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers have looked into the existing traffic calming in Cromwell Road and suspect it is just one of many roads in the Bretch Hill 20mph zone that don't meet the design requirements for a zone, in that technically they don't have enough traffic calming features.</p> <p>This can sometimes be addressed simply by adding repeaters or carriageway roundels to make the spacing compliant but only physical features such as humps are guaranteed to reduce speeds - and the police will always insist that 20mph limits should be 'self-enforcing'.</p> <p>We will look into funding and potential resources for this particular area, as well as the area as a whole, to identify where calming features and signage could be explored as a whole scheme.</p>

	<p>With regard to the specific speeding problem in Cromwell Road, a preliminary survey has identified two locations where road humps could be put in, subject to a technical survey, consultation and funding; and one location where a carriageway roundel could be added. As there are already raised junctions we will also look into whether there are adequate warning signs to reflect this.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES</p> <p>On 22 August 2023, the Oxford Mail reported this Council’s Cycling Champion as saying that a “majority” of residents in Oxford were “in favour of LTNs” yet have found it “difficult to gain publicity”. What evidence exists to support this claim?</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Results from county council-run consultations show that more people oppose than support the LTNs in Oxford. Rates of support tend to be higher among residents within LTN areas, although they are not generally the largest proportion of respondents to council-run surveys.</p> <p>A 2022 YouGov poll among Oxford residents showed that 56% of respondents supported LTNs, while 29% opposed them. The total sample size was 249 adults, and the figures were weighted and considered representative of all adults aged 18+ in Great Britain.</p> <p>A separate survey was run by the Divinity Road Area Residents Association in early 2021. The survey asked 446 residents for their views on trialling an LTN in their area and 90% of residents across all streets were in support or neutral.</p> <p>The results from the most recent council consultation in summer 2023 are being analysed. Consultations feedback and other data will form part of what is considered when cabinet decides on the future of the east Oxford LTNs in October.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p>

<p>Given that a majority of residents seemingly oppose LTNs, will the Cabinet Member agree not to proceed with future schemes where a majority, under public consultation, is found to be against a given scheme.</p>	<p>The process for any future scheme brought forward by this administration or any other is a matter for that administration.</p>															
<p>6. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES</p> <p>How many Council officers have been (i) made redundant and (ii) left the Council under settlement or compromise agreements since the beginning of the financial year 2021/2 and (iii) how much have such departures cost?</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>In respect of the figures for 22/23, I think at the last Council meetings Councillor Phillips confirmed for our benefit that some four staff have taken between them £840,000 of public money in respect of their exits. It follows from her figures that the remaining 30 staff have taken the balance of £300,000. Can she explain this disparity?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES</p> <p>Information on exit packages including redundancy costs, pension contributions in respect of added years and costs of early retirements without actuarial reduction in benefits, ex-gratia payments and other departure costs for all services provided by the Council, including maintained schools, are included annually in the statement of accounts. The total cost of exit packages and the number of staff in 2021/22 and 2022/23 as set out in the statement of accounts is set out below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="896 826 1646 941"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Compulsory</th> <th>Other</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>27</td> <td>42</td> <td>69</td> <td>£1.276m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>19</td> <td>15</td> <td>34</td> <td>£1.140m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>I think the majority of the costs are a legal requirement and it would cost us more in legal fees if we didn't pay it.</p>	Year	Compulsory	Other	Total	Amount	2021/22	27	42	69	£1.276m	2022/23	19	15	34	£1.140m
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<p>7. COUNCILLOR KIERON MALLON</p> <p>The 1st Grimsbury Scout Group provide excellent youth programmes for over 90 children across Banbury. They have done so for many years from the same premises. Regrettably, the County Council appears to have been, at best, slow and, at worst, obstructive surrounding the group's ongoing ownership or occupation of the site. This has led to the Scouts incurring legal fees of over £2,000 without completion of a new freehold or leasehold arrangement, which could have been dedicated to supporting local children. Will the Cabinet member defend this position and, if not, will she now intervene to support the Scouts?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KATE GREGORY, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES & SAFETY</p> <p>Thank you, Cllr Reeves, for your question. I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Council, to apologise to the 1st Grimsbury Scout Group for the delays they have experienced in agreeing a new lease for their use of a site owned by the County Council. Having looked into this matter, I can see that the previous lease expired in 2016 and that this regrettable situation was allowed to persist under a succession of administrations since then. The Director of Property has written to the Scout group in the last few days and confirmed the council's intention to renew the tenancy without delay and on the previously agreed terms.</p>
<p>8. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW</p> <p>It has been widely reported that Labour has scrapped a commitment to rolling out Clean Air Zones (CAZs) across the country. The party's programme no longer includes support for the zones. Where does this leave the coalition's plans to expand the Zero Emission Zone across the centre of Oxford?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan includes proposals to expand the current Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) pilot in Oxford city centre to improve air quality in the wider historic city centre (roughly from Magdalen Bridge to the railway station, and from St Giles to Folly Bridge), which as Cllr Bartholomew will recall was a policy promoted by the previous administration in which he served. However, the exact timing for the expansion is yet to be confirmed, and will depend on a number of variables such as the completion of the Botley Road bridge works, progress with other traffic management schemes, and further work with Oxfordshire residents and businesses (particularly in the city centre). I am very aware of the many pressures on budgets as a result of the cost of living</p>

SUPPLEMENTARY

Paragraph 1e of the officer report for the provisional revenue outturn asks Cabinet to approve the creation of a reserve of half a million pounds income relating to the zero emission zone. This indicates the policy has been a financial success but a policy disaster Does the Cabinet member agree? If not, please explain how taking half a million pounds from Council taxpayers and residents benefits the environment.

crisis on both households and businesses, which make it important that we get the ZEZ right, but also we all know there are compelling public health reasons for putting forward measures such as this, for the sake of us all but particularly the very many people in our County whose health is directly impacted by poor air quality.

RESPONSE

It has been a success in its own terms. The improvements in air quality are the absolute key measure here and there has been a significant improvement in air quality in the pilot zone and the income which has come from that is in excess of the half a million he talks about. So I think in financial terms as well it is sustainable. It is something which can be reinvested in further clean air within the city and the county.

The other advantage we've had is our partnership with businesses in the area and particularly delivery businesses who moved very rapidly and we're lucky about this in Oxford to things like cycle freight and also electric vehicles and I commend our friends in Royal Mail in particular for that. But there are other delivery companies as well. We've also been working very closely to see the impact on businesses within the pilot area and we're pleased to say that by and large we've been able to overcome problems there with their help and also we've had some pretty good feedback that it hasn't been as disruptive as thought.

So the expansion of the zero emissions zone is something that we are still considering and will be consulting on with people across both the city and the county. We will particularly want to engage and talk to, of course, those businesses and residents who exist within the proposed larger boundaries and will want to make it again something which isn't a revenue raising measure but instead focused laser like on improving air quality across our historic city centre. But there's a lot more work to be done before that happens. This is something which is proposed but there is still a lot of talking to be done before that happens.

9. COUNCILLOR TED FENTON

How much does the Council spend either directly or indirectly through contractors on temporary road signs ("Road Closed", "Diversion", "Roadworks" etc.) each year and what, if known, is the average lifespan of such signs?

SUPPLEMENTARY

My question really was not about the provision of these signs, which I think on the whole is good and is admirably done, it is on the removal of the signs when they're no longer necessary. I just wonder if he doesn't think that we could add to our efficiency somehow if we could get contractors to

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

The need to sign, light, and guard road works is a mandatory, legal requirement. The number, type, and arrangement of those temporary traffic management (TTM) measures; including that of temporary traffic signs, is prescribed by a series of nationally prescribed regulations.

The County Council does not directly procure the majority of TTM. Instead, its provision is on a hired basis and is included within the overall cost of contracted works. As such the cost of signs in those circumstances are not readily obtained.(As an illustrative cost, a single sign hire rate is in the region of £0.95 per day)

However, TTM that specifically relates to diverted traffic routes owing to highway works are an exception and these signs are often provided by our delivery partner Milestone Infrastructure, in some instances having first been manufactured in the County Council's on-site 'sign services' at Drayton Depot.

The provision of any bespoke diversion and special event signs produced , which reuses most of the sign plates by removing and re-lettering the signs to suit. This activity utilises approximately 500 each year and costs in the region of £3,500 plus approximately £22,000 of labour associated with recycling the signs.

RESPONSE

I am sure we can always find ways of improving our efficiency in our dealings with our contractors. The question doesn't specifically mention removal of road signs at the end of a project, but I am certainly happy to add that to the question and get a response. As you will understand, these are operational decisions made by officers and contractors and not by me, but I'll certainly look into that.

<p>remove the signs when they've done the work.</p>	
<p>10. COUNCILLOR TED FENTON</p> <p>A great number of street lights in my division have been on during the day since they were replaced with LEDs. Is there a general problem?</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>Does he have any idea when the faulty sensors will be replaced or do we have to wait and see how many are faulty?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>I can confirm officers have been made aware of a faulty batch of photocells by our term maintenance contractor. These are the light-sensitive sensor that have been installed as part of the LED delivery and are used to manage the switching on and off operation of the streetlights. The photocells themselves are designed to fail in the on position. Therefore, can be spotted during the daytime and reported. Our term maintenance contractor will be replacing these as part of the warranty.</p> <p>We do urge residents to report any issues they identify with street lights these through FixMyStreet (https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/) or calling the help line (0345 310 1111) where they will be actioned for replacement.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>I am afraid I don't know the answer to that, but I will certainly look into that. The response says that they will be replaced as part of the warranty. It doesn't say when and I will try and find that information.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR TED FENTON</p> <p>We have been promised two additional crossing of Deer Park Road in West Witney, can the Cabinet Member give a definite date for the installation of these and is there anything he can do to speed up delivery?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers are pursuing the two proposed crossings on Deer Park Road and the bridleway improvements between the site boundary of Windrush Place and Deer Park Road, as one project to efficiently utilise the S106 funding secured for these schemes. At the moment, they are working on the initial business case for the whole project and scoping out the ecological surveys for the bridleway section.</p>

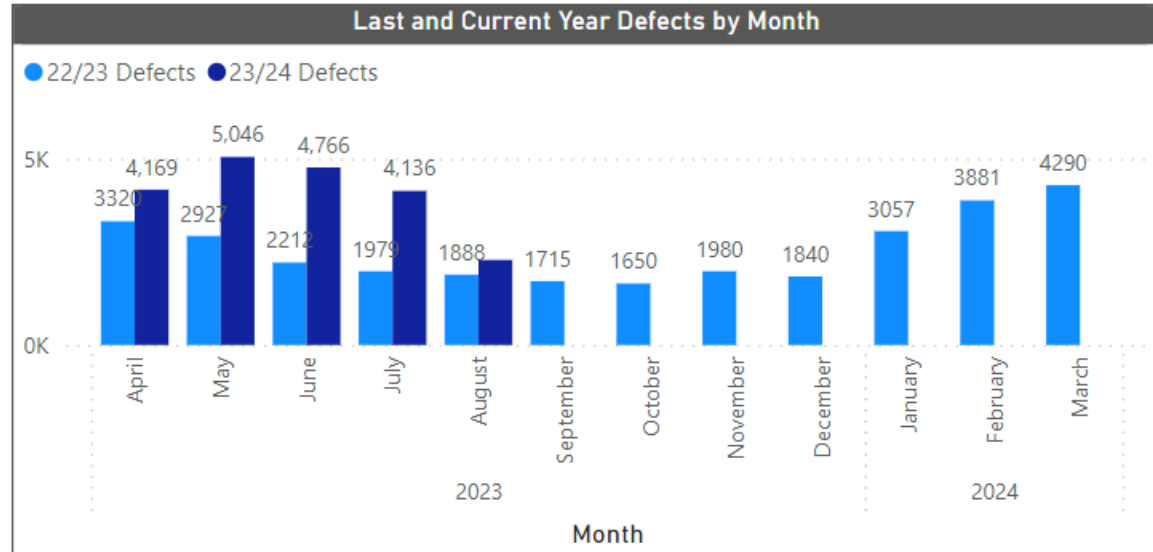
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>I wonder if you agree with me that this project, rather like the traffic lights on the other side of Witney and Councillor Coles' Division on the Old Bedford Rd, which are there in fact, but covered in hoods and have been for months, does he agree with me that some of these projects are frustratingly slow?</p>	<p>I am unable to give a definite date for the installation but the design work is due to commence around March 2024.</p> <p>I cannot speed up the delivery as the engineering team have a time limitation on DfT funded schemes that they are currently working on. The officer team will keep you up to speed as the scheme progresses. Once we have the designs, the full business case can be completed and timings for implementation agreed.</p> <p>RESPONSES</p> <p>I think one soon gets used to living with frustration at the slowness of major infrastructure highways projects but they're complicated there are a lot of legal and financial processes that need to be gone through. I am grateful to the councillor for drawing this particular one to my attention. I would just point out he did ask me if there's anything that I personally can do to speed up delivery. I get asked that quite a lot and obviously Members will understand it is not up to a cabinet member or a councillor to try and intervene and speed up things in anybody's particular division but I will certainly see where this project has got to and report back.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR DONNA FORD</p> <p>On average, how long does it now take the County Council to send substantive responses to letters and emails that they receive from Members of Parliament within the county?</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>I appreciate you won't have this information to hand, but if I could have the standard</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES</p> <p>I have obtained statistics from the Chief Executive's office and the directorate of Environment & Place – both of which receive a significant number of communications from MPs. It indicates that the time to supply a substantive response averages 20 calendar days.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p>

<p>deviation by MP and by Directorate to follow that would be fantastic.</p>	<p>I am going to hesitate to agree to give you that information just because of the amount of time it might take for us to glean that information. However, I'll take advice from officers as to how far we can meet your request.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON</p> <p>Please give an update on bus routes to Brize Norton and status of bus shelters which have been promised and still have not been implemented.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Stagecoach service 233 to Burford, Carterton and Witney continues to operate via Brize Norton village hourly on Mondays to Saturdays and two-hourly on Sundays, in line with identified demand. Service S1 provides frequent links to Carterton, Witney and Oxford up to every 15 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays from the roundabout stops, with comprehensive provision in the evenings and on Sundays.</p> <p>Following a recent funding award, the Council currently has out to tender a bus service between Witney, Carterton and Swindon which would provide some additional limited connectivity for the village and we are in discussions with a bus operator regarding provision of peak time express services from Carterton to Oxford, which would serve the roundabout stops. Whilst the Council intends to deliver these services, they cannot yet be guaranteed until operators can be secured at an acceptable price.</p> <p>In relation to the Monahan Way bus shelters, a potential source of funding has been identified and officers are working on the detailed specifications for new shelters to be passed to our contractors for potential implementation early next year. An updated quote is being sourced for footway works and subject to an acceptable price it is intended that this will be delivered in a similar timeframe.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p>

Please give an update on pothole repairs. How many are outstanding in Oxfordshire and West Oxfordshire? Also results of the new materials to fix potholes: are there any results/conclusions yet available?

As of Tuesday 29th August, when the report was run, there were 561 potholes actioned for repair with 239 of those being within West Oxfordshire.

To date, across the county, over 20,000 defects have been repaired since April. The overall numbers month by month compared with last year are significantly higher than last (and previous) years.



In respect of the defect repair innovation methods, as this was a trial, we will need to review over a longer period to identify which products and methods would benefit the council in terms of cost benefit, productivity and quality. Our contractors Milestone are preparing an initial feedback report, which should be available in the near future. The area and the result will continue to be monitored, with the forthcoming winter being the key period.

15. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES

COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT

The Council states publicly that its Traffic Filters policy “will help tackle climate change, reduce local air pollution and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities”. Why therefore will low-emissions cars be subject to fines while more polluting taxis and buses will not?

The question asked selectively quotes only one of the stated objectives of the traffic filters.

As set out in the report that the Cabinet considered in making its decision to approve the introduction of the trial traffic filters, the county council wants to reduce unnecessary journeys by private vehicles across Oxfordshire and make walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. This will help deliver an affordable, sustainable and inclusive transport system that enables the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. The traffic filters are an important tool to achieve this in Oxford. They will:

- 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) and
- help tackle climate change, reduce local air pollution and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities (as quoted)

All parts of Oxford will remain accessible by car with the filters in place. Permits will be available for a wide range of car drivers. If too many private cars were allowed to drive through the filter points, it would not be possible to achieve the reductions in traffic and associated congestion to achieve the objectives above.

By the time the traffic filters come into operation, nearly 70% of bus mileage in Oxford will be operated with zero-emission electric buses, with almost all of the remaining mileage operated by low emission Euro VI diesel vehicles.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Can you set out for us in clear terms what constitutes a necessary car journey within Oxford and an unnecessary one?

All Hackney carriage vehicles (“black cabs”) licensed in Oxford are required to be ultra-low emission electric or range extended electric vehicles by 2025 under the city council’s licensing requirements.

If, following public consultation, the council Cabinet decides to implement the expansion of the Oxford zero emission zone that is currently under development, this will help incentivise people to switch to low and zero emission vehicles and would apply to all vehicles, including private hire vehicles and the vast majority of larger vehicles that are exempt from the traffic filters.

RESPONSE

The policy is as set out in the exemptions as part of the traffic filters proposal that was adopted by Cabinet. It is being introduced as an ETRO. The whole point of an ETRO is that it is monitored and consulted on in real time, and if it is found that any changes are required for operational purposes, then they can be made. That is one of the beauties of an ETRO. Necessary and unnecessary by definition are words which involve an element of judgment.

So no, I can't give you a precise definition of those that would stand up to a sort of precise scientific mathematical definition. But I think the principle underpinning the filters and the scheme of exemptions is clear. What they are intended to do is to make our city work better. There are too many vehicles on the roads.

The roads are congested. I would absolutely love it if we could solve that problem by everybody who decides to get into a vehicle thinking for themselves if there is a better way of getting their children to school, for example, and taking that opportunity if it exists, but clearly a necessary journey includes a business trip where the business person needs to move around by a powered vehicle and that is accommodated by the scheme of exemptions.

16. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

I emailed you on 3rd August about an important point relating to the relative importance of OCC's LTCP in relation to the SODC Local Plan but have not had a response. The planning application I detailed to you showed that an OCC officer's recommendation to object to the application on sustainability grounds was removed under pressure from SODC Planning before the application was determined. The essence of the SODC Planning argument was that OCC's LTCP policies in relation to sustainability would not stand up at appeal. Does it concern you that the LTCP seems to carry so little weight?

SUPPLEMENTARY

You say that while local transport plans are statutory documents for transport authorities,

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

There are a number of documents used to assess a development proposal on its merits. The documents used to respond to planning applications are specific to the varying types of planning application such as standard Full, Outline and Reserved applications. Within the core documents used to respond to planning applications there are a large number of detailed practical policies. There are also a number of nationally produced documents that cannot be influenced by OCC.

The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) is one of the documents considered by officers when responding to planning applications. However, Local Transport Plans (LTP) whilst they are statutory documents for Transport Authorities are not a key document in the planning system.

It is therefore important that key LTCP policies are reflected in documents such as the District and City Council Local Plans. There is ongoing work to develop updated Local Plans in Oxfordshire and officers are engaging with the District and City Councils to ensure that there is alignment with the LTCP and key policies are reflected.

We are also awaiting updated LTP guidance from the government, which was scheduled for public consultation in the summer. This is planned to be the first update to LTP guidance since 2009. Through this process, we will continue to highlight the importance of LTPs to central government and the need for greater alignment with the local planning regime and the wider planning system, which we understand is proposed to be a key feature of the updated guidance.

RESPONSE

I have relied very heavily on advice from officers within this Council to construct this answer because planning is quite a complex area and whether something is

they are not a key document in the planning system. How then is our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan anything more than a worthless flag waving exercise when it comes to inappropriate planning applications.

a key consideration or not depends on the advice given by officers from a variety of different places including, of course, officers here who respond to development proposals in an appropriate way and in line with county policy. What we need, however, is to have alignment between local plans and the local plans are all in the process of being updated at the moment, as I am sure councillors will all know, and I hope are involved with as well as the county's policies which have a bearing on planning as well.

And so we are working with our city and district colleagues who are the planning authorities to incorporate the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan into their local plans, which will give them much greater weight. We also depend on the interaction between national policies and planning and guidance at the moment is pending from national government, which is going to be an updated version of what I understand was last prepared in 2009 and again when they're in parallel and working together, they will have much greater weight and have a much better coincidence. Finally as well we work of course quite significantly with land owners and developers right across the county in talking about transport and working with them because a lot of it is delivered as part of developments, whether that be employment sites or domestic sites. So every single planning application is a matter for negotiation with the applicant, both by primarily the planning authorities, city and district and the county.

But it is an ongoing piece of work to make sure that all of this work is aligned and that everybody has a clearer understanding of what we're trying to achieve here, which is moving to sustainable transport choices including private cars where necessary but supporting really good public transport, making the best of our limited rail network and joining us in arguing for more, but also having really good active travel as well and also at the same time making sure that particularly residential developments have really good services on site including things like Pharmacies, GP services in my view a pub is an absolutely essential element of any significant development and so on.

	<p>So all of these things are about alignment, of working together with partners and that includes land owners and developers. But I'd be very happy incidentally to come back on any particular issues relating to a specific planning application and don't hesitate, any councillors, to get in touch with me.</p>
<p>17. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW</p> <p>You have shown sensible leadership setting up a cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group in relation to council property. In your own words, it would be a foolish politician who said their party would continue in power for the lengthy period property issues take to resolve. In this context, does it disappoint you that your Liberal Democrat colleagues at SODC are pursuing their plans to spend £25million of Council-Tax-payers' money on an extravagant new council HQ, while Oxfordshire has multiple existing unused or underused council offices, including Abbey House in Abingdon from where SODC currently operates with no apparent problems?</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>Please explain to me how you personally believe that an holistic approach to council property in Oxfordshire is not the best way forward.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>The cabinet will continue to pursue the adopted property strategy of Oxfordshire County Council and I welcome cross-party support for the steps we are taking. It is not for me to comment on how other councils manage their properties. Instead, I refer Cllr Bartholomew to the excellent Facebook post dated 12 August on the David Rouane - Didcot Liberal Democrat page (https://bit.ly/david-rouane-gives-the-facts) which dispels many of the misconceptions about the project repeated by his party during the election period, and repeated by him in his question, including the cost of what is a regeneration project on a derelict site and the suitability or otherwise of Abbey House as a permanent base for the two councils.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>As you and I have discussed at the property group that we've created for advising the County Council, it is important that we take account of our property stock as you know from the conversations we've had about County Hall, a deficit of maintenance and repairs over many years, including under the previous administration, when I know both you and Councillor Mallon held the property portfolio at different times, has led to significant deficit and some real challenges. And so therefore working together, we do need to take account of these and see</p>

	<p>what we can do in the best interests of the taxpayers of Oxfordshire, both from the point of view of cost but also from the point of view of delivering an excellent service including first class democratic representation.</p>
<p>18. COUNCILLOR NATHAN LEY</p> <p>The Abingdon Marathon is one of the UK's oldest and most prestigious running events. It is run on a strictly not-for-profit basis and with all proceeds donated directly to local charities and organisations. As the event seeks to increase its national profile and bring further economic, leisure and health benefits to the town and county, will the cabinet member endeavour to proactively engage in dialogue with local members and the District and Town councils where relevant to ensure the county council contributes to the success of this event in whatever way we can through 2024 event and beyond?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL O'CONNOR, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & INEQUALITIES</p> <p>Being physically active is incredibly important for our wellbeing and has benefits for both mental and physical health. We know that during COVID-19 many people become less physically active and through the recent Dir of Public Health annual report and the forthcoming new Oxfordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we are working with partners such as Active Oxfordshire to address this. Guidelines are for adults to do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (which includes running), spread over the week. Across Oxfordshire we are lucky to have a plethora of activities and events that enable people to become and remain active which is really important for wellbeing, and this includes events like the Abingdon Marathon. As the County Council we are responsible for managing the highway network and we have a team of Officers involved in the planning and coordination of events on the highway, a function that sits within the remit of my cabinet colleague Cllr Grant. Their work supports events like the Abingdon marathon as they provide advice and guidance to event organisers, arrange Special Event Orders and approve traffic management plans, attend Safety Advisory Groups, which involve the District Council and Thames Valley Police, and ensure that appropriate diversions are in place when road closures take place as a requirement of their statutory duties. There are charges in place for this work, and have been for some considerable time, which are passed on to event organisers.</p>
<p>19. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SADBURY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY & ENVIRONMENT</p>

With the announcement of the Thames Water Management plan going to the Secretary of State on 31.8.23, putting the SESRO reservoir scheme ahead of any water transfer options, as the County Councillor for Steventon, which is one of the parishes front and centre of the proposal, can the Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility please tell me and my resident's how this Council is going to respond and reaffirm this Council's commitment to object to the scheme that is on the table and now published in their water resources plan, and what the next steps are in raising concerns and residents' voices being heard, given the experience so far and the nature of the proposal coming under a National Infrastructure style scheme through the OFWAT RAPID scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Does the Cabinet member have any insight as to why the Severn-Thames transfer has been pushed into the long grass with mere lip service in the report as even the Thames Water draft report itself is contradictory on the subject in multiple numbers of its pages. And can we check what's actually been submitted to the Secretary of State with Thames Water given that it is noted the huge response from Oxfordshire residents on the water transfer coming before the permanent infrastructure proposal of SESRO and given that the size of

As you are aware, OCC has always objected to this scheme, and we will continue to do so on the grounds of local impact, inappropriate input assumptions and failure to prioritise climate resilient solutions, particularly recycling. Although the water resource management plans have now been submitted to the Secretary of State (Therese Coffey), they are not yet signed by her. Even if the plans are finalised as written, the proposed reservoir near Abingdon, which will be termed a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), will need to go through a Development Consent Order (DCO) process and the Council will work with Vale of White Horse District Council and other interested parties to raise concerns and ensure residents' voices are heard.

RESPONSE

This is a complex situation, but it is the case that the water industry has not been noted for its devotion to public service over the last 30 years and the importance to all of us is that it is public money. Anything that is built will be paid for by us and by our successors for time immemorial. It is extremely difficult to get through the defences that the water companies in their cabal have erected against questioning. At a recent briefing for myself, Councillor Leffman and the chief executive, their answers were mostly 'we're only obeying orders', 'so this is what the government told us', and so on. I am concerned from my portfolio point of view, that building a reservoir that doesn't deliver any water for nearly 20 years in a drought stressed area, collecting its water only from that drought stress area, does seem to be somewhat foolish in a deteriorating climate. You have to be taking mogadon not to be slightly concerned about the way the

<p>SESRO is now back to the megavor status which one cannot help but wonder if this has a direct relationship to being a more attractive investment opportunity given Thames Waters' precarious recent news and resignations.</p>	<p>climate is becoming very unpredictable. I am concerned particularly about their failure to consider recycling, which is both extraordinarily scalable, would provide enormous amounts of water and is extremely resilient to any future scenarios. Their main excuse to that seems to be the public don't like the idea - the public don't like sewage in rivers either but the industry doesn't seem to worry about that. And suddenly they are worried about the public not liking the idea of recycling wastewater. I think that's where the answer probably lies, and it would avoid an awful lot of extremely destructive infrastructure as well.</p>
<p>20. COUNCILLOR BETHIA THOMAS</p> <p>Recently the dental practice in Faringdon has closed its doors to all NHS patients. This has caused great concern as it is the only practice in Faringdon and serves the residents of the town and many of the outlying villages in the Western Vale.</p> <p>Could you clarify if the council has any involvement in NHS provision in these circumstances and what if anything we can do to help improve the level of service in the Western Vale and, more broadly, across the county?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL O'CONNOR, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & INEQUALITIES</p> <p>OCC does not have a direct role in commissioning or providing dentistry services in Oxfordshire. The responsibility for commissioning dentistry in Oxfordshire sits with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire Integrated Care Board in partnership with NHS England. Nonetheless, we recognise the importance of oral health to our overall health and wellbeing and are doing what we can to improve provision through our informal influence.</p> <p>Nationally, dental services are in crisis. Over 90% of dental practices are not accepting new patients. The British Dental Association estimated in August last year that after a decade of 'savage' cuts, an additional £880 million a year would be needed to restore funding to 2010 levels.</p> <p>A summary of the problems with dentistry services in Oxfordshire can be found in the minutes of the Oxfordshire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee's 20th April 2023 meeting:</p> <p>Agenda for Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 20 April 2023, 10.00 am Oxfordshire County Council</p>

<p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>Having spoken to the Chair of HOSC, Councillor Hanna, I believe that the national change as referred to here are a tinkering and do not bring the solution that is able to address my residents' concerns. Would it be possible for the Cabinet Member to meet with the HOSC chair to discuss and identify any</p>	<p>The report from health partners notes that numerous practices are terminating their NHS contracts. When this happens, arrangements are put in place to try to find local practices to cover this loss on a temporary basis prior to a procurement exercise to find a replacement. But replacements are not always available, reflecting long-term underfunding and structural problems.</p> <p>There have been some national changes to the NHS Contract in 2022 that aim to address these challenges. These changes will allow payment for higher levels of performance and increased payments for more complex treatments. Updated advice has been issued about recall intervals for patient check-ups.</p> <p>The County Council's Public Health team will shortly be publishing an Oxfordshire Oral Health Needs Assessment that will put a spotlight on the importance of preventive measures. This will include a focus on addressing inequalities within the top ten most deprived areas, on improving oral health care in care homes, and on targeting children at higher risk of poor oral health, including children in care and care leavers. The Assessment will recommend continued collaboration for a financially sustainable model of NHS dentistry provision.</p> <p>We are committed to driving an improvement in oral health within Oxfordshire's health and social care system. But our influence is limited, and there are significant problems that arise from deeper difficulties.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>I would be very pleased to meet with Councillor Hanna, but I would also like to draw Councillor Thomas' attention to some statistics I have quoted from the British Dental Association which note that after a decade of savage cuts, an additional £880 million a year would be needed to restore funding to 2010 levels and the nationwide satisfaction with NHS identity services is at its record low. In the most recent British Attitudes survey only 27% of people said they were satisfied with NHS dentistry services and while I will do all that I can to push for</p>
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<p>more locally based solutions to this crisis in my division and elsewhere in the county?</p>	<p>better services for the people in our county, this is a nationwide issue and does reflect a decade of austerity, underfunding, under resourcing, which is playing out throughout our health services.</p>
<p>21. COUNCILLOR BETHIA THOMAS</p> <p>For several months now residents have come to me complaining of the disruption to their day to day lives as providers such as Gigaclear have come to the town to install cables to improve broadband services. I am sure most residents welcome the promised improvements to these services, but the amount of disruption that has come with it has not been. Residents have reported that they have had access to their properties blocked, damage to the pavements and kerbside outside their homes, have seen littering and fly-tipping by contractors, and recently I had a complaint that only a short time after one provider had completed works, another began digging in the same area – they were asking quite rightly, why these works hadn't been coordinated better to minimise disturbance and disruption to residents.</p> <p>I would like the Cabinet Member to clarify the County's involvement in these works, giving a summary of what has been achieved and what is still to be expected?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The council has limited contracted works in operation with fibre providers. This is restricted to our GigaHubs project delivering fibre to community centres, schools and suchlike. There are 200 in total and around 40 remaining for completion. From the information provided it would not appear that these works are related.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, the council maintains that the full fibre rollout across the county is welcomed and we actively support and work with several of these suppliers who are investing significant private capital without public subsidy. It is not possible under current legislation to coordinate works as these firms are all in full competition with one another, have their own project finance sign-off procedures, and need to plan their build works with many variables impacting delivery plans. Our digital infrastructure team continue to try to improve opportunities for collaboration and recently held a F2F workshop with all relevant telecoms operators. The conclusion is willingness to share ducts/trenches in the main branches of the fibre build, but not in local streets, at least at this stage.</p> <p>Recognising however that there are and will continue to be local issues that require attention, the council's digital infrastructure team have employed a dedicated highly experienced fibre inspector to liaise with residents, suppliers, and the council's street works team which grant the permits for the operators to have access to our highways and footpaths. Councillors should email broadband@oxfordshire.gov.uk with a brief outline of the problem and a member of the team will be in touch to arrange a site visit.</p>

<p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>I would just like to confirm whether the email address you have provided is publicly available and can be used by town council officers and residents as a portal to follow up different aspects of this activity, progress making good damage to our roads and pavements, for instance.</p>	<p>RESPONSE</p> <p>Yes, indeed it is. Not least because it is published in these papers which are of course themselves publicly available.</p>
<p>22. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Some high street businesses in Witney are getting parking tickets for loading or unloading outside their shops. Can the Cabinet ask officers to investigate putting two loading bays in place near the market square?</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p> <p>I just wondered if he could confirm how long local businesses have to load and unload on that single yellow line that he mentions.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers have discussed options to provide more loading facilities on Market Square which would involve converting existing disabled persons parking by way of an experimental order. This would allow the Council to monitor the effect of the order before recommending any permanent changes.</p> <p>Presently, we are currently running an engagement/feedback exercise with the local community on future changes to the High Street and Market Square. We will look at the responses received with particular regard to disabled users requirements balanced against the needs of businesses accessing properties.</p> <p>In the meantime, businesses can load/unload using the single yellow line on the east side of Market Square, outside Nos. 45-48.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>That's a matter for national legislation, and I have to confess I don't have the answer to that off the top of my head but just to say that you are allowed to load and unload outside of premises as long as that is what you are actually doing, even on a double yellow line. If you were actively stopped with the boot and</p>

	<p>taking stuff in and out, you can do that. But what you cannot do is then go in for a cup of tea and leave the vehicle parked there</p>
<p>23. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm if there are plans to restrict vehicle use of the Witney Road between Brize Norton and Curbridge villages to private vehicles?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>A specific scheme to use traffic restriction powers on the Witney Road between Brize Norton and Curbridge villages to remove through traffic is not identified in Oxfordshire County Council policy.</p> <p>The Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (see link Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (oxfordshire.gov.uk)) identifies proposed scheme 90 as a cycling scheme located at Witney Road, between Carterton and Witney for a two-way segregated cycle track (for which some land take may be required).</p> <p>Should Witney LCWIP scheme 90 be taken forward a detailed options appraisal assessment may be required, which would explore alternative scheme options that deliver similar benefits and help lead to the preferred scheme option being identified. In this context of alternative options the use of traffic restrictions may be documented in an options appraisal report.</p>
<p>24. COUNCILLOR LIAM WALKER</p> <p>Please can you confirm how much income has so far been generated from on-street parking charges in Woodstock and how many parking tickets have been issued since the scheme was implemented on 1st June.</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Between 1 June and 31 August the revenue received in respect of on-street pay and display charges is £31,813.60. In the same period a total of 542 Penalty Charge Notices have been issued in all areas of Woodstock.</p> <p>RESPONSE</p>

I just wonder how much has the Council made on those parking tickets as well?

I don't have that figure to hand, but I would just repeat what I have said to you before that the ideal income from penalty charges and fines is zero in the situation where nobody breaks the rules, that would be the ideal amount of income from penalty charge notices. Paying for parking is hardly a new idea introduced by this draconian wicked council. It has always been a combination of a policy to manage traffic demand and to pay for services. That has always been the case.