

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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 DONNA FORD</p> <p>A recent report in The Times refers to Oxfordshire County Council as having a 'do as we say, not as we do' attitude on the environment, reporting:</p> <p><i>"Outside the capital, Oxfordshire county council, which claims to be "leading the way" on the environment by seeking to become net zero by 2030, consumed 66 per cent more gas than neighbouring Buckinghamshire, which is sticking to the national target of net zero by 2050."</i></p> <p>Is The Times' report correct and, if not, why not?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to debunk this sloppy journalism. At the time of writing, I believe three Councils mentioned (including Hackney, OCC and Bucks) have written to The Times, objecting to the gross misuse of data, about which our Estates department briefed them in full prior to publication.</p> <p>Looking at objective benchmarking data. We have two sets, one in the public domain, the other a shadow benchmark. The first is Climate Emergency UK, which used a broad range of benchmarks including Buildings & Heating, Transport, Planning and Land Use, Governance and Finance, Biodiversity, Collaboration and Engagement, Waste Reduction and Food. The highest score, 63%, was the GLA. Our total Score, 53%, Put us Top out of 21 County Councils (average score, 34%). It would have put us 16th out of 186 single tier authorities (like Bucks), 5th out of 164 Districts, 3rd out of 10 Combined Authorities, and 21st overall out of 381 authorities in Great Britain. However, comparisons across authority type are not valid.</p> <p>The Second benchmark is the Carbon Disclosure Taskforce, https://www.cdp.net/en/climate an international benchmarking system with scores ranging from A to D-. We were rated A-, which puts us above over 2/3 of European and ¾ of global participants.</p> <p>Returning to the tabloid article: it is a cherry-picking exercise finding single datasets to support a false hypothesis. It compares varied organisations on a fallacious "like for like" basis irrespective of type of authority, population served</p>
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	<p>(our population is 1/3 larger than Bucks'), number of employees (20% larger), varied or additional responsibilities (of which the fire service is one example), the types of buildings they own and whether they bulk buy on behalf of schools (a third of our energy use), or for how many schools. If you're after sensible information, this is as useful as comparing apples, pears and coconuts.</p> <p>However, we are not where we would want to be with decarbonising our estate, scoring just below the mean for County Councils. There might have been more capital available if the previous Conservative administration had not left behind a £38 million backlog of building repairs and maintenance, plus £16 million of remedial work putting right schools built under their useless Carillion contract, presumably without adequate monitoring by that administration.</p> <p>That notwithstanding, please be assured that our decarbonisation plan fits with our 2030 net zero target, and we fully intend to hit it.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Councillor Gant, urgently look at solving the issue of the storm drainage at 49 Fairway Road by the bus stop? Highway officers inform me that this is an issue between Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Water, but as the storm drainage has been overwhelmed by flooding 5 times in 2024, this is also a major inconvenience for people using the StageCoach B5 bus service, as they have the chance of getting drenched when cars drive by whilst waiting for the bus service.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Officers have confirmed that the surface water drainage at this location is a shared system with Thames Water. I can confirm that Oxfordshire County Council have checked and cleansed the assets that we are responsible for. We will contact Thames Water and impress upon them the need to get this matter resolved.</p>

<p>3. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>The Council makes a lot of its aspiration to reduce car journeys by one in four in its press releases. However, most residents, businesspeople and public sector leaders in Oxfordshire have no idea how this policy aim is to be measured? What is the baseline for this objective and how, by implication, can we measure the Council's success against its progress?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Car trips were not previously monitored and there is not an available data source. Therefore, working with the Council's Innovation team, we developed a bespoke methodology. The methodology was included in the LTCP monitoring report that went to cabinet in October 2023. The monitoring report is published on our website here and includes the methodology in appendix 2 (p40-42).</p> <p>It is a complex measure and the monitoring report highlights that it is a proxy rather than an absolute measure of the number of car trips. The methodology allows us to understand the percentage change from a sample of car trips but does not provide an overall countywide figure. The 2022-23 monitoring report used a 2019 baseline, due to the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, and compared 2022 data.</p> <p>We are continuing to work to refine our methodology and increase data sample sizes in future. There will also be the opportunity to review the baseline years used in the 2023-24 LTCP monitoring report.</p> <p>Separately, alongside our car trip monitoring work, we have been working on a pilot countywide travel behaviour survey. This data will provide further insight about the type of trips in the county and reasons for travel behaviour change.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS</p> <p>In response to a planning application affecting my division, officers noted that the 'network of 7 Household Waste Recycling Centres provided by the County Council is no longer fit for purpose...analysis shows that all sites are</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS</p> <p>Thank you for this question. We are aware of the challenges facing our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) which is one replicated in many places nationally. To help address this a new Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy 2023-2043 was approved by Cabinet In September 2023 a</p>

currently 'over capacity' at peak times and many sites are nearing capacity during off peak hours. Population growth linked to new housing developments will increase the pressure on the sites.'

Given the number of new housing developments in the county, what are the plans to meet the increased demand on these services?

copy of which can be found on the council's website here: [HWRC Annex 1.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-waste-recycling-and-circular-economy/oxfordshire-waste-recycling-and-circular-economy-annex-1)

Our new strategy offers the overarching framework for managing the service for the next 20 years and sets our approach to try and ensure that the HWRC network it is not just fit for purpose but is a key component in delivering the Council's climate and sustainability ambitions, encouraging Oxfordshire residents to produce less waste and recycle more.

The new Strategy aims to maintain a network of 7 HWRCs, by securing and expanding (or relocating where this is not possible) existing HWRC sites to manage the expected population increases, legislative requirements, and support climate ambitions, whilst being mindful of local government budgetary constraints. It lays the foundation that enables the following:

- (a) Securing S106 and CIL contributions,
- (b) Make maintenance, planning, lease, and investment decisions with a longer-term perspective,
- (c) Plan how we will deal with population growth/lack of HWRC capacity,
- (d) Develop the HWRC service to meet future legislative requirements,
- (e) Help to meet the Council's carbon objectives and enable the transition to a circular economy,
- (f) Increase Oxfordshire's reuse and recycling rates.

Officers have a wealth of data and analysis on our network of HWRC's and keep this under regular review, whilst also keeping abreast of emerging and best practices nationally with regards to operation and capacity around HWRC sites. Where further improvements or adjustment can be seen to make a discernible difference and can be justified, we will seek to adopt those.

We always welcome feedback and suggestions on the services we provide. For the HWRC service we do regular customer satisfaction surveys which have

	<p>delivered excellent satisfaction levels over recent years, and of course we consulted on our DRAFT HWRC strategy before finalising it. However, for any other comments and suggestions residents can always contact us through the council's Complaints and Comments page Complaints and comments about Oxfordshire County Council Oxfordshire County Council, and we will be happy to respond and/or take on board suggestions for our future service delivery where we are able to do so.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO</p> <p>An important consultation took place on the planning application for the Watlington Relief Road. However, residents have reported that they find the OCC consultation page confusing. In particular that responses from statutory consultees are mixed in the list of documents with the consultation documents. An additional concern is that only responses from statutory consultees are made public and not those from other respondents. What action will be taken to improve the user experience of the website to better support engagement?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR GEOFF SAUL, CHAIR OF PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE</p> <p>The list of documents on the Oxfordshire County Council planning application portal does not separate application documents and consultation responses. We appreciate the concerns however, this is how the system works at the present time. It does not have the option to separate out these items. To avoid confusion, the Planning Team ensure that consultation responses are clearly labelled as such. It is also correct that we do not publish representations made by members of the public on our website for data protection reasons. However, we take them all into account in making a decision and a redacted compilation of representations can be provided to anyone requesting it, at the end of the consultation period. Given the ongoing concerns we are also raising this with our planning system provider to see if we can address this with an upgrade.</p>
<p>6. COUNCILLOR GEORGE REYNOLDS</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member assure me that the 2 yard stretch of fenced off kerbing at the top of Constitution Hill, B4035 Broughton Road in Banbury will be mended before the third crop of annual wild flowers turns it into a permanent wild</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>A works instruction has been raised to repair the kerbing at the top of Constitution Hill, B4035 Broughton Road in Banbury. It is expected the works will be carried out within the next 3 months and I confirm that it will continue to be kept safe in the intervening time.</p>

life area, as at present it is dangerous and very untidy.	
<p>7. COUNCILLOR GEORGE REYNOLDS</p> <p>Following the highway department reorganisation which has seen at least 3 members of staff leave, meaning Fix-my-Street is every bodies' main source of contact with OCC. Will the Cabinet Member ensure that not only are contacts acknowledged but regular follow ups are given. At present Fix-my-Street is very good for street light defects but a black hole for virtually everything else from which nothing emerges.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>I'm aware a number of highways officers have left the organisation, however, this was due to retirement and not as a result of the department reorganisation.</p> <p>As part of the Highway Maintenance transformation, a Highway Engagement Team has been introduced. If you have any concerns regarding Fix my Street reports, please reach out to them directly through highwaysengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk .</p> <p>I can confirm since the implementation of the Highway Maintenance transformation on 1 of November 2023, Oxfordshire County Council have received 21,589 enquiry reports via Fix my Street and have raised over 23 thousands highway related defects. As part of this process, a standard response is provided to each individual site assessment. Bearing this in mind, if you have any examples where this hasn't occurred, please let me know and I will arrange for this to be followed up with the appropriate teams.</p>
<p>8. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION</p> <p>How many members of staff and governors have left Woodeaton Manor School or tendered their resignation (i.e. are presently working their notice period) since 1 January 2023?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES</p> <p>16 governors have left Woodeaton Manor since 1 January 2023, of which, 4 were staff members who also left their employment. In the same timeframe 25 members of staff left of which 9 gave no reason, and 8 resigned to move to a different position.</p>

<p>9. COUNCILLOR TRISH ELPHINSTONE</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member for Transport Management conduct an urgent review of the operation hours of the Littlemore Road filter ANPR cameras to cease operation outside of peak and school travel hours, with exemptions for blue badge holders and carers; and consider Littlemore and Greater Leys, as areas of higher transport poverty, as trial locations for a new demand responsive bus service in 2024/25?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>A review of the ANPR exemptions and timings will take place at the same time as the review of the traffic filter exemptions/timings. In the meantime, funding has been allocated for this new financial year to undertake a study into a new demand responsive trial bus service. This work has not yet started but will consider Littlemore and Greater Leys. Littlemore and Greater Leys are both priority areas for the Community Active Travel outreach project, (COATs). Through Active Oxfordshire the county is funding a range of active travel interventions in the area. A list of the projects funded is as follows:</p> <p>Oxford: Achieve Oxford - Cycling proficiency sessions in Blackbird Leys. Asylum Welcome - Bikes for asylum seekers. Aiming to reach a minimum of 250 people Black women bike -Training black women leaders to lead black women bike groups (Abingdon and East Oxford) Broken Spoke – “Dr Bike” sessions, bike mechanic training and learn to ride in Blackbird Leys and Rosehill. People Place and Participation (Florence Park Community Centre) – and Walk, talk and tea. People Place and Participation (Florence Park Community Centre) - Bike racks and training for parents and families JoyRiders - Cycle training in Littlemore and Barton</p>

	<p>Oxfordshire Asian Women's Voice - Walking group for socially isolated Asian ladies</p> <p>Oxfordshire Mind - Walking for wellbeing (Oxford and Banbury)</p> <p>Active Future South Oxfordshire CIC - After school Bike Club (Abingdon and Didcot and Littlemore).</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR TRISH ELPHINSTONE</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Transport Management describe the progress to use the Anti-Congestion Fund (2025L&CO16) and Vision Zero fund to redesign junctions, such as Newman/Oxford Road, The Original Swan, Brasenose Driftway, Horspath Driftway and the Corner House roundabout to improve traffic flows and reduce tailbacks?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>There has been a review of the road safety improvements for cyclists that can be implemented at the junction of Horspath Driftway, and Aldi. As with all Vision Zero schemes, this scheme has been developed to improve road safety, and has not developed as a scheme to improve traffic flows or reduce tailbacks. The scheme is currently with our Contractor Milestone for finalisation of the costings and implementation timetable.</p> <p>The process and prioritisation for allocating the Anti-Congestion Fund has not been fully agreed yet but will be shared with all County Councillors. We have asked officers to prepare a proposal for the prioritisation as we are aware that there are potentially many calls on this funding, including the other junctions referred to which do not fall within the remit of the Vision Zero fund. The future reporting of the progress on these schemes will be carried out through our normal council reporting routes and political group leaders meeting.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Cornmarket Street and Queen Street are possibly the most prominent and heavily-used streets in the County, at least by pedestrians. They are in a shameful state. When will they be properly resurfaced?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Extensive repair works are planned for both Cornmarket Street and Queen Street in this financial year. Works are expected to take place in the summer, starting on Queen Street. The project duration will be between 9 – 12 weeks depending upon conditions and external factors. However, start dates are</p>

	<p>dependent on delivery of specialist materials from abroad and it is not yet possible to provide a confirmed date.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>There is widespread outrage about the greatly increased dumping of sewage in our rivers and streams by Thames Water. The Tories should hang their heads in shame at the catastrophic privatisation they were responsible for. As if this wasn't bad enough, there is an even greater source of pollution in our poor waterways — agricultural run-off. Freshwater species have declined by a whopping <i>84% since 1970</i>, so action is urgently needed now. What are we doing to persuade farmers to change their practices to reduce harmful run-off?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS</p> <p>We agree that the pollution of our watercourses through sewage and agricultural runoff is unacceptable and having a devastating impact on nature. The Environment Agency are the body with both the responsibility and the powers for monitoring and managing the quality of our water courses including these types of pollution, and for working with relevant organisations, landowners, or people to stop that pollution, including taking formal enforcement action where appropriate.</p> <p>The increasing incidence of both heavy and prolonged rainfall tends to worsen agricultural runoff, but renders riverside fields increasingly unviable for (especially arable) farming. It also raises the importance of landscape scale flood control measures, such as re-establishing riparian flood meadows and woodlands, which reduce nutrient and other runoff. We are working with the charity that runs the Long Mead wildflower meadow to extend that form of land management (which also produces very high-grade animal feed) along the river on land that OCC owns. Separately I am told by the local NFU representative that numbers of farmers are considering "farming water" on floodplain fields, opening up opportunities to extend this.</p> <p>That links directly with OCC's work with a wide variety of partners to protect and enhance biodiversity in our county including as part of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership to engage with the farming clusters. We are the Responsible Authority leading on the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which will identify and map out the priority areas for</p>

	<p>urgent action for nature recovery. It is already clear from the early engagement undertaken that river health is a major concern for people across Oxfordshire, including farmers. The LNRs will highlight locations where people and organisations across Oxfordshire could carry out habitat improvements including the improvement of river and freshwater habitat health. Defra are then expected to use these LNRs (which are currently being created across all of England) to increase the opportunities for funding in those areas. LNRs are expected to publish in spring - summer 2025.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Every Saturday and Sunday much of Oxford City Centre is gridlocked for hours, because traffic is queuing to get into the Westgate car park, even when it is full up. Residents in my division are utterly fed up with this state of affairs. The traffic filters may well make it even worse, since some people will use their free day passes to get to the Westgate car park and others will continue to access it via Botley Road. Please can you tell me what you are going to do about this?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>It is actually quite possible that the trial traffic filters will help tackle the negative impacts of Westgate car park traffic queueing on Oxpens Road. This is because we expect the filters to reduce traffic overall in the city centre. Indeed, a lot of the traffic held in the queue on Oxpens Road approaching the car park entrance isn't destined for the car park. It is carrying on past the car park and through the site of the proposed Thames Street traffic filter. So at least some of the traffic queuing on Oxpens won't be there in the future thanks to the traffic filters.</p> <p>We also expect the filters to make non car alternatives for accessing the Westgate and wider city centre to become much more attractive – buses will be quicker and more reliable and walking and cycling safer and more convenient. This of course includes park & ride. Along with the continuation of the combined parking and bus fare deals for the city's park and rides, this will ensure driving is much less of a default option for people wanting to visit the city centre. We will, of course, be monitoring the traffic filters very carefully during the trial.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, we naturally continue to work closely with the Westgate Centre to minimise the impact of car park traffic on the highway network.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY</p> <p>The SEND improvement board is a closed shop, why isn't this meeting broadcast / in public, and / or why aren't minutes of these meeting been circulated to all members and why aren't more stakeholders engaged in the board / task forces? This council's administration makes constant reference to its openness and transparency, why aren't we seeing these values imparted into the SEND Improvement process?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KATE GREGORY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SEND IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The SEND Improvement Board has been set up to provide accountability to the DfE, and to meet the requirements for monitoring and technical work in respect of the formal SEND Improvement Notice.</p> <p>The Board brings together a wide range of stakeholders including schools, parent carers, statutory agencies, service agencies (most of whom are responsible and accountable for delivering operational services), and importantly, broad elected member representation. Key stakeholders are involved in task and finish groups. They are operational and technical working groups for service delivery involving those with direct responsibility for delivery.</p> <p>The meeting is not a public or council committee and would not be broadcast in public.</p> <p>A regular blog summarising the content of the meeting is provided publicly by the Independent Chair, Steve Crocker. In May, a summary plan-on-a-page will be published and updated regularly to show key milestones and changes over time.</p> <p>The board members have established a positive and collaborative working relationship that is evident from action being taken and willingness of all parties to make things better.</p>

<p>15. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY</p> <p>At some recent OxPCF events around Co-Production, a “adopted definition” for what OCC sees as Co-Production was presented to the audience. How was this statement of Co-Production reached and what engagement of service users and associated professionals / parents and carers fed into that creation?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KATE GREGORY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SEND IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The ‘adopted definition’ of co production is not what OCC sees as co-production but one agreed in partnership. A significant piece of work was undertaken on the definition of co-production pre covid 2017-19 with partners and parents including the PCF. Given the significance of this work already undertaken the definition was sense checked and adopted. Given that it was imperative to have a working definition and in recognition of the previous co-production work, a working definition has been produced.</p>
<p>16. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW</p> <p>Government has issued councils strengthened guidance on setting 20mph speed limits, reminding them to reserve such measures for sensible and appropriate areas only – such as outside schools. It is not a model this council has followed. I have repeatedly submitted Questions on Notice asking for data to validate this council's county-wide, multi-million-pound expenditure on the 30mph to 20mph sign-changing exercise but you have not been able to produce any data other than an 18-month-old report for Cuxham and one for Long Wittenham. When I challenged that at Full Council in December you said that such data was unnecessary as the scheme saved lives. Please be specific and state how many lives have been saved and what your source of the information</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The County Council’s approach to, and criteria for introducing 20mph speed limits as a part of the Transformation Programme has always been clear, transparent, and dependent on appropriate environmental factors being present. Those requirements are publicly available on our webpage.</p> <p>Before any scheme is pursued it requires the support of the local town / parish council, and each one follows the ordinary process of advertisement and consultation, all of which is subject to public record.</p> <p>It is not reasonable, or possible, to state a specific number of the lives that have been saved by the scheme, especially at this early stage.</p> <p>The Welsh government press release which cites the 4mph speed reduction you refer to also says <i>“Research shows a strong link between lowering speeds and decreasing the number of collisions and people injured. On urban roads with low average speeds, there is average 6% reduction in collisions per 1mph reduction in average speed.”</i> This means that the 4.1mph reduction would reduce the number of collisions by approximately 25%. Which is significant.</p>

<p>is. Please do not answer with generalised information about the comparative effect on pedestrians of 30mph speeds compared to 20mph speeds as this is meaningless unless the ACTUAL range of 'before and after' speeds at sites is known.</p> <p>(Note that Transport for Wales measured speed from 3.4 million vehicles across nine new 20mph locations in Wales over a two-week period at the end of November and start of December. It found on average speeds dropped by just 4mph. This is broadly consistent with the limited data available from OCC.)</p>	<p>The number and severity of recorded traffic collisions resulting in personal injury will be monitored across the county in areas where a 20mph limit has been introduced under the transformation programme. This will be done by analysing data of such instances, as is provided to the Council from the Police, over the 3-year period before and after the scheme's introduction.</p>
<p>17. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW</p> <p>At your 'Cabinet Member Decisions Meeting' on 22 February, you made the decision to cease late-night summer opening at Household Waste Recycling Centres on Thursdays from 1 April 2024. This measure saves £27,000 per year. Meanwhile, the council is currently recruiting an 'Employer Brand and Marketing Specialist' on £40,000 per annum with 30 days holiday plus Bank Holidays, who only needs to come into the office two to four days per month. Please explain to residents why it is more important for the council to promote its 'brand' and market</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS</p> <p>Despite regular promotion, the one day a week late night summer opening was a little used additional service, which did not provide the value for money we seek, with sites seeing less than 10 visits per hour on many occasions. In addition to the financial saving there are operational benefits from this change around logistics and working hours. This is a very small seasonal reduction. At present our sites, compared to some other council areas, continue to provide a full, generous, and comprehensive Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) service to our residents. Even after this small adjustment all our 7 sites remain open 9 hours per day, 7 days per week 362 days of the year. The only exception being slightly early closing on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. I am also proud and pleased to state that this much valued service continues to perform extremely well, with market leading recycling performance</p>

<p>itself rather than receive residents' waste at HWRCs.</p>	<p>of over 70% of the wastes received, as well as maintaining customer satisfaction levels of greater than 90% across all sites.</p> <p>Following recent Government changes, both in terms of legislation for handling and disposal of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's), and the reduced ability to make charges and recover costs for DIY wastes at our HWRC's, waste management costs have risen by around £1m per annum. As we as an authority try to provide a balanced budget to cover all services, the waste management service is, quite rightly, not exempt from any cuts and efficiencies to its services. The reduction in Household Waste Recycling Centres' operational hours was one of a much wider and necessary list of service efficiency savings across the authority and cannot and should not be directly linked/compared to a specific non comparable cost elsewhere.</p>
<p>18. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW</p> <p>This council has announced that the Oxford city Zero Emissions Zone pilot generated £702,940 income from charges and fines over its first full financial year of operation, thus the scheme is a policy failure but a financial success. The forthcoming Expanded Zero Emissions Zone is projected to generate £25m over a five-year period by the council's consultants. I can see why you welcome this tax-grab that helps you balance the books, but please explain how this fund-raising, 'pay to pollute', policy is compatible with the administration's environmental objectives.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The income figure of £702,940 from charges and fines for the scheme's first full financial year of operation (April 2022 to March 2023) is gross income. The overall costs incurred by the scheme for the same April 2022 to March 2023 period are approximately £410,000. Income generated by the scheme must be used in the first instance to pay for scheme operating costs and after that will contribute to an element of scheme development costs. By law, any remaining net proceeds must be spent on schemes and measures that facilitate the achievement of the county council's local transport policies.</p> <p>There is no projection of income yet from a potential expanded ZEZ as this will depend on future decisions made about the scheme, which is at an early formative stage.</p>

	<p>The ZEZ is a longstanding county council commitment that aims to improve air quality, cut carbon emissions, and move towards zero emission travel in the city.</p> <p>We are encouraged by the findings of the ZEZ Pilot monitoring report that was published recently and which found a substantial reduction in use of polluting vehicles in the ZEZ Pilot area since the scheme became operational. These findings, when comparing 2022 data to 2021 data in the 12-month period that included the launch and subsequent operation of the scheme, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ overall vehicle movements in the ZEZ reduced during the scheme's operating hours (7am to 7pm) by approximately 28%. This figure includes vehicles exempt from ZEZ charges such as buses, taxis and emergency vehicles; ▪ overall vehicle movements in the ZEZ excluding exempt vehicles reduced during the scheme's operating hours by approximately 37%; ▪ vehicle movements in the ZEZ outside of the 7am to 7pm operating hours have reduced overall, although by less than the reduction within the 7am to 7pm period; ▪ there has been an overall shift towards the use of vehicles in the ZEZ with less polluting engines and with lower CO2 emissions. <p>Additionally, the monitoring report noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ air pollution levels decreased overall in the ZEZ in 2022 by more than the average decrease across Oxford; ▪ the scheme has encouraged adoption of zero and low emission vehicles;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proportion of vehicles used that are zero emission is higher in the pilot area than in other areas of Oxford. <p>These findings show that the ZEZ scheme is helping deliver our aspirations for environmental improvements particularly regarding improving air quality and reducing vehicle-related CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>Early indications from more recent monitoring are that these benefits are being maintained.</p> <p>Furthermore encouraging findings published by Oxford City Council show an increase in footfall in summer 2023 and a reduction in business vacancy rates in the city centre.</p>
<p>19. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION</p> <p>Since the start of the financial year 2021/22, how many SEND cases have gone to tribunal each year and at what expense to the public purse?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KATE GREGORY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SEND IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>For consistency, tribunal figures are calculated on a calendar year. The figures for Oxfordshire are as follows: 2021 - 193 cases were taken to Tribunal of which 29 were heard. 2022 - 276 cases were taken to Tribunal of which 20 were heard. 2023 - 347 cases were taken to Tribunal of which 29 have been heard. So a total of 816 cases of which 78 have been heard.</p> <p>The average cost of legal support for a Tribunal is £2,500. So the cost for those heard are as follows: 2021 - £72,500 2022 - £50,000 2023 - £72,500 Total - £195,000</p>

<p>20. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION</p> <p>Since the introduction of the new booking and charging regime at the county's recycling centres, what adverse impacts, if any, have there been on fly-tipping and complaints-handling rates?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS</p> <p>The impact of the new booking and charging system on complaints has been negligible (single figures) and mainly relating to technical issues rather than policy. We have seen some increases in calls to the Customer Service Centre, since the introduction, however, nothing significant has come from this.</p> <p>As expected from National data, there is no evidence of any correlating increase in fly tipping since the introduction of the new system.</p> <p>In general, the new service has been well received with residents now being able to dispose of small amounts of DIY waste for free. It should also be noted that bookings are only needed for the free DIY allocation, no restrictions or bookings are required for additional DIY wastes which remain chargeable.</p>
<p>21. COUNCILLOR GEOFF SAUL</p> <p>The buried remains of a Romano-British Settlement have been scheduled as an Ancient Monument on land that had been designated to form part of the <i>East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area</i>. The County Council is the largest landowner on this site which was earmarked in total for 1,200 homes plus associated infrastructure. Can the Cabinet Member for Finance please provide an update on the County Council's revised plans for the</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>As you know, Oxfordshire County Council has been working with CALA Homes to promote the East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area for the provision of new homes.</p> <p>Historic England's report was just regarding the land owned by CALA Homes. CALA Homes is seeking clarification from West Oxfordshire DC (WODC) regarding the full implications of the site's scheduling and the future use of the whole site south of the A44.</p> <p>Following the outcome of this feedback, Oxfordshire CC will review the impact on the land it owns and whether it will continue working alongside CALA</p>

<p><i>Strategic Development Area</i> or alternatively let us have a timescale for such a review to take place?"</p>	<p>Homes. The site to the north of the A44 is also owned by Oxfordshire CC and was always seen as the second phase of the development. There is ongoing discussion with the planning team at WODC to establish whether the development of this site can be considered separately to the site south of A44 or whether part of the southern site can be developed how the two sites should be delivered.</p> <p>Once the scheduling of part of the site is clarified, further meetings with the planning team will be arranged.</p>
<p>22. COUNCILLOR DONNA FORD</p> <p>How many accidents have occurred in the vicinity of the Banbury Road since the installation of 4 way lights?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>There is no definitive record of traffic collision frequency. Only those which are attended by the Police and where the Police record an instance of personal injury are formally recorded. Even in those circumstances the reports are typically received from the Police several months after the actual incident. Collisions which do not have Police attendance, and/or where no personal injury occurs, are not recorded. Any concerns about road safety at that location, or at any other location in the County can be raised with Officers who will be pleased to discuss them.</p>
<p>23. COUNCILLOR DONNA FORD</p> <p>Can you explain why this Council seems determined to refuse to consult with the public before allowing 2-way cycling in Sheep Street, Bicester?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The results from the initial consultation into the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) to permit two-way cycling throughout Sheep Street, Bicester will be presented at the Cabinet Member for Transport Management delegated decisions meeting on 25 April 2024. The initial consultation took place over four weeks from 12 February to 11 March 2024. During this period, stakeholders were engaged through various</p>

	<p>channels to gather feedback on the proposal to allow cycling in Sheep Street, Bicester.</p> <p>Stakeholders including Bicester Town Council, Cherwell District Council, Bicester Vision, Bicester Friday Market, Bicester Bike Users' Group (BBUG) and other cycle groups, Local Councillors, emergency service operators, public transport operators, and Unlimited Oxfordshire were contacted to participate in the initial consultation process. To ensure comprehensive community engagement, 223 drop-in letters were distributed to properties along Sheep Street and Market Square, inviting residents and businesses to provide their input on the proposed changes.</p> <p>Should the ETRO be approved on 25 April 2024, the ETRO can run for a maximum duration of 18 months. During the first six months of the trial views of the public and stakeholders will be sought based on their lived experience of the scheme. This consultation will be reported back to the Cabinet Member for a formal decision and whether to make cycling permanent in Sheep Street, amend the times/days that cycling is permitted or return the street to 'no cycling'. Monitoring of cycling levels in Sheep Street will be conducted during the ETRO period in order to understand the levels of change in cycling.</p>
<p>24. COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE</p> <p>During my time as a County Councillor, we have enjoyed a positive working relationship with our local highways officers. Unfortunately since the 'transformation' of the service last autumn, this appears to have broken down. Is this by design or by accident?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>All Members of the Council have been briefed on the highways service changes post-transformation and have been informed of how to contact and engage with the service.</p> <p>That contact should primarily be via the new Engagement Team and not directly to Officers, many of whom have been assigned different or more focussed roles.</p>

	<p>The Engagement Team will only be able to function effectively and provide the service as intended though if Members start to work with them and positively adopt this new way of working.</p> <p>The Engagement Team can be reached by emailing highwaysengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk .</p>
<p>25. COUNCILLOR IAN CORKIN</p> <p>The recent announcement by the charity, Autism Family Support Oxfordshire (AFSO) that this council has defunded the Parent Support Team, prompting the loss of this essential service and the redundancy of two very experienced practitioners, has caused widespread consternation amongst parents, carers, and young people. So far, almost 1100 people have signed an online petition, many sharing their experience of the service.</p> <p>Following the announcement, I have received many emails, as well as having the opportunity to discuss the impact with parents face to face at the recent Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum's excellent Better Together Event. The following is a small sample of the feedback I have had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking of the support they have received from AFSO: <i>"That could be the difference between a young person able to take</i> 	<p>COUNCILLOR KATE GREGORY, CABINET MEMBER FOR SEND IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>I have also received many emails and spoke to parents and carers at the Better Together Event, and it is clear that the Parenting Support provides a vital service to many families, and I am sorry that the announcement by the charity has caused anxiety and distress for those families impacted.</p> <p>Commissioning and procurement rules mean that commissioned contracts are only time-limited before they are required to be recommissioned and retendered. This is to allow fairness to all other providers to bid for Council and taxpayer money. It is also required to ensure that the provision of service is adaptable to changing needs across the County.</p> <p>A decision to recommission and retender short breaks contracts was approved in November 2022 in the run up to the known end date of the contracts in March/ April 2024. Short breaks is a legal definition which means that money should be spent on the direct provision of activity for children. It does not include parenting support. This does not mean that the work by AFSO is not valued, but that it cannot be included in a short breaks definition and there were gaps for direct provision for children.</p>

<p><i>their place in the world of work in a few years' time and one who cannot"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing of her lived experience as a neurodiverse parent of a neurodiverse child: <p><i>"There have been times when I have doubted whether I could continue to parent my son, on my own and with little support. AFSO supported me through this.</i></p> <p><i>There have been times when I felt my son would be better off without me. AFSO supported me through this.</i></p> <p><i>There have been times when I felt I could no longer live in the situations we were living in. AFSO supported me through this.</i></p> <p><i>There have been times when I felt I could no longer live, full stop. AFSO supported me through this.</i></p> <p><i>Where would I be now if it weren't for AFSO? And my son? I don't like to even think about that."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking of the impact on a parent's own health: <i>"thank you for your reply and for trying to help with this situation. It has sent my mental health into a spiral and I'm in touch with other autistic parents</i> 	<p>Prior to my time and to this Cabinet, a decision was made around 2017 to provide AFSO with money because they had not had their service recommissioned by a Health provider.</p> <p>The Council stepped in on that occasion to help the charity because they had insufficient funding. It was always going to be a time limited level of support.</p> <p>In May, June, and November 2023 it was made clear to the charity that they could not bid for short breaks funding to provide parenting support. However, they were successful in bidding for short breaks money that provided direct support and fitted with the purpose of short breaks funding.</p> <p>The commissioning and procurement process was compliant with procedures and regulations and addressed gaps in provision. The matter of award of contracts was not discussed directly with me as Cabinet Member and Member's cannot influence commissioning and procurement awards.</p> <p>Parents and carers working with the PCF were consulted on the types of provision and localities for the direct provision they thought were needed under the definition of short breaks. The consultation had 121 responses/ feedback. The council provided additional finances to ensure there was a wider spread of direct activities by location and to meet different needs for children. The parents were not asked to directly make a choice between short breaks or parenting, as parenting is not within the definition of short breaks.</p>
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who are also struggling massively because of all this. I am truly fearful for the future wellbeing of families like mine”

- Talking of the lack of transparency in the consultation process: *“We are also appalled by the response by OCC in the press that is blaming the parents for not saying we needed it. Something clearly went wrong with the re-tendering process because we had no idea that the short breaks consultation was also covering family support. If it had been, there is no doubt that parents would have had it at or near the top of their lists of priorities.”*
- Finally a parent talking of their relief at finding an ally for the first time in AFSO: *“That’s when we first had contact with AFSO. It was incredible. I cried the first time I had a one-to-one meeting with BL. Tears of sheer relief. She just got it. She was incredible. It is so very rare to find people who immediately understand. And who have the strategies and insight to help you reach and teach your child. They have ideas and advice for everything. Not to mention the skills to pick you up from your dark place and give you the strength to keep going”*

In response to the announcement, the [Oxford Mail](#) reported

“An Oxfordshire County Council spokesman said: “A re-commissioning process commenced last year for AFSO with involvement from parents, carers, current providers, other professionals, and social workers. Questionnaires, and a variety of events were used to ensure that any new contracts met the needs of children using the services. Parents and carers overwhelmingly told us that they wanted greater choice for their children. They said they wanted the new offer to provide care for children rather than parenting support.”

So, my question is:

- What was the exact timeline of the re-commissioning process?
- At what point were elected members involved
- Was the impact of the re-commissioning, i.e. the loss of the Family Support Service, discussed with any elected members, if so who and what was the outcome?
- Please provide a copy of the questionnaire with the answer, as well as details of the

number of respondents and the analysis of the data used to justify defunding the Family Support Service.

- Please provide any evidence you have that “*They [parents and carers] said they wanted the new offer to provide care for children rather than parenting support.*” and that this would be at the expense of the Family Support Service.