

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Annex 3

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 MICHAEL WAINE</p> <p>Given the high return rate to the consultation on the Bicester Sheep Street Two- Way Cycling proposal, what percentage of ‘strongly disagree’ responses would have enough impact to change your decision?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>There is no percentage figure which automatically triggers a particular decision, as the responsibility of the decision maker is to read responses and analyse them, not just count them.</p> <p>The ETRO process provides for ongoing consultation during the first six months, whilst also collecting data. The pre-consultation process enabled me to consider the areas of objection or concern voiced and how these could be addressed during the ETRO.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE</p> <p>Responses to the Sheep Street Two-Way Cycling consultation showed very clearly that the public were extremely concerned about safety to pedestrians and the disabled. Given your worrying decision to go ahead with proposals, what process will be in place for the reporting of accidents, and who carries responsibility for recourse?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The Cabinet Member Decisions (CMD) report contained a detailed analysis, in a separate appendix, of consultation responses, including the demographic represented by the responders.</p> <p>I would refer the questioner to the record of the meeting for the very detailed and lengthy consideration given to all factors which I was asked to take into account, and to how I did so.</p> <p>Considerable safeguards were built into my decision over and above those already enshrined in the CMD process, including a formal report back to CMD, and an approach to DfT about making different arrangements on Fridays.</p> <p>Accidents are reported through the police.</p>

	<p>People can provide feedback to the consultation on the ETRO through Oxfordshire County Council's Let's Talk pages.</p> <p>Feedback on the consultation could also come via the local county councillors to the Place Planning North inbox.</p> <p>Vivacity technology will be in place and we are reaching out to Cherwell District Council for CCTV access. Officers will be monitoring speed, the tracking of cyclists, how use they use the space and information on pedestrian movements. We are also looking at the availability of "Near-miss" technology.</p> <p>An officer within the Place Planning North team will coordinate this work.</p> <p>I have requested a regular update to go to Cabinet Member Decisions and will be the one that makes the decision whether to make the Order permanent, amend it or discontinue it.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE</p> <p>Now that Sheep Street will no longer be a pedestrianised street, how will 'two-way' cycling be monitored, and with what enforcement?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>It will be a two-way shared space for cyclists; the one-way street only applies to motorised vehicles.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Following on from the previous Cabinet question regarding flooding of Warwick Road properties, I'm afraid to say that although highways officers have investigated, nothing has been done. The drainage is over capacity and holds water at the first sight of</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council have a scheme to create a bypass drain and additional gullies at this location. We are currently awaiting confirmation of a price from our contractors. It is envisaged the work will commence in the new year though we are unable to give an exact date at present. The work will however be carried out during this financial year.</p>

<p>heavy rainfall. I've been told this is due to tree root ingress on the majority of the storm drainage system.</p> <p>Again, this is down to Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Water. Residents are getting their driveways flooded out and the road in question holds water, but literally doesn't dissipate into the drainage storm system.</p> <p>Can I, as local member for Banbury Ruscote, get a timescale of work for Warwick Rd or some kind of resolution to a problem that over 8 years?</p>	<p>Flooding occurs at this location due to Thames Water's surface water drain being blocked by tree roots and our gullies are connected to their asset. We have chased Thames Water and will continue to do so.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR NICK FIELD-JOHNSON</p> <p>Why do we need another consultation on A40?</p> <p>Clearly residents have said that they wanted a dual carriageway in both directions all the way to the Wolvercote roundabout from Witney. This would significantly alleviate the congestion</p> <p>A further consultation is a waste of time and money as well as clearly shows that residents requests and opinions are again ignored.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The most recent consultation for the previous A40 Smart Corridor Scheme was in 2019 which consulted on the Dualling scheme (Witney to Eynsham) and the Bus Priority Scheme (East and West bound bus lanes and active travel improvements from Eynsham to Wolvercote including Wolvercote bridge capacity upgrades). Since that consultation, the A40 Smart Corridor Scheme has suffered significant impacts from global inflation, challenges in land assembly, ecological impacts, and changes in legislation such that the programme became unaffordable in its current form. A full scheme review was commenced and at the July 2023 Cabinet, it was agreed that an alternative solution for scheme delivery was required to be identified that met the funding requirements and delivered the most beneficial value. A new scheme with a change of scope has been negotiated with our funding partners (Homes England and DfT) which aligns with national and local policies and delivers on the desired benefits within the funding envelope. This scheme is called the A40 Eynsham Park and Ride to Wolvercote and is presented in the new public engagement process. This latest version of the scheme requires a new planning application, as such, the</p>

	current engagement round is needed to provide part of the evidence base for the new planning application.																							
<p>6. COUNCILLOR KIERON MALLON</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council of the number of gullies cleaned by Oxfordshire County Council in the last full calendar year (2023)?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The number of gullies cleaned between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023 is 38,860.</p>																							
<p>7. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Finance provide head-count figures for full- and part-time staff were employed and engaged by Oxfordshire County Council in each of the last four financial years (2021/2, 2022/3, 2023/4 and current)?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>This Table shows the number of employees, both full time and part time that have been employed at the County Council during each financial year.</p> <p>EMPLOYED:</p> <table><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>Full time employee</th><th>Part Time Employee</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>2021/2</td><td>2,889</td><td>2,227</td><td>5,116</td></tr><tr><td>2022/3</td><td>3,055</td><td>2,255</td><td>5,310</td></tr><tr><td>2023/4</td><td>3,164</td><td>2,214</td><td>5,378</td></tr><tr><td>2024/5 (as at Sept 24)</td><td>3,315</td><td>2,185</td><td>5,500</td></tr></table> <p>Note on Employed Headcount: The snapshot figures for the three full financial years are as of 31st March at the end of each Financial Year.</p>				Financial Year	Full time employee	Part Time Employee	Total	2021/2	2,889	2,227	5,116	2022/3	3,055	2,255	5,310	2023/4	3,164	2,214	5,378	2024/5 (as at Sept 24)	3,315	2,185	5,500
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	<p>This Table shows the number of agency workers, both full time and part time that have been engaged at the County Council during each financial year.</p> <p>ENGAGED (the below numbers are for those engaged via Comensura only):</p> <table><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>Full time agency</th><th>Part Time agency</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>2021/2</td><td>286</td><td>19</td><td>305</td></tr><tr><td>2022/3</td><td>375</td><td>22</td><td>397</td></tr><tr><td>2023/4</td><td>379</td><td>7</td><td>386</td></tr><tr><td>2024/5 (as at Sept 24)</td><td>370</td><td>15</td><td>385</td></tr></table>	Financial Year	Full time agency	Part Time agency	Total	2021/2	286	19	305	2022/3	375	22	397	2023/4	379	7	386	2024/5 (as at Sept 24)	370	15	385
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<p>8. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Finance advise as to the expenditure by Oxfordshire County Council on (i) agency staff and (ii) consultants in each of the last four financial years (2021/2, 2022/3, 2023/4 and current)?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <table><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>Agency Staff (Comensura spend)</th><th>Consultants (Non Comensura spend)</th></tr><tr><td>2021/2022</td><td>No information</td><td>Spend not tracked in 2021/2022</td></tr><tr><td>2022/2023</td><td>£27,770,000</td><td>£12,260,000</td></tr><tr><td>2023/2024</td><td>£27,980,000</td><td>£8,090,000</td></tr><tr><td>2024/5 up to Q2 24/25</td><td>£13,800,00</td><td>£2,550,000</td></tr></table> <p>1. Notes on agency spend</p> <p>1.1. Also includes individual consultants recruited via the primary corporate contingent contract.</p> <p>1.2. Since 2022/23 only spend categorised as agency spend has been included.</p> <p>2. Notes on consultancy service spend</p>	Financial Year	Agency Staff (Comensura spend)	Consultants (Non Comensura spend)	2021/2022	No information	Spend not tracked in 2021/2022	2022/2023	£27,770,000	£12,260,000	2023/2024	£27,980,000	£8,090,000	2024/5 up to Q2 24/25	£13,800,00	£2,550,000					
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	<p>2.1. Includes spend recorded in the accounts against Management Consultant Fees, Technical and Professional Consultant Fees.</p> <p>2.2. Includes spend against previously reported consultancy services spend not classified as per point 2.1.</p> <p>2.3. Spend on delegated schools and Adopt Thames Valley excluded.</p> <p>2.4. There is additional consultancy services spend not recorded here as it does not meet the two conditions listed in 2.1 and 2.2. This can be obtained but would require further time to complete the data extraction and preparation.</p>								
<p>9. COUNCILLOR EDDIE REEVES, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member for Finance advise as to the expenditure by Oxfordshire County Council on (i) redundancy settlements, (ii) non-disclosure agreements and (iii) settlement agreements in each of the last four financial years (2021/2, 2022/3, 2023/4 and current)?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>Total expenditure by Oxfordshire County Council (including maintained schools) on redundancy settlements, non-disclosure agreements and settlement agreements is as below:</p> <table><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>2022/23</td><td>2023/24</td><td>2024/25 Year to end of November</td></tr><tr><td>£1.276m</td><td>£1.140m</td><td>£0.685m</td><td>£1.137m</td></tr></table>	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 Year to end of November	£1.276m	£1.140m	£0.685m	£1.137m
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<p>10. COUNCILLOR GEOFF SAUL</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member give an update on progress in bringing forward plans for the East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (in respect of which the County Council is a major landholder)?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>Tank Farm in Chipping Norton, now known as the East Chipping Norton Development, was designated as a Strategic Development Area by, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). Approximately 1,200 homes were planned on the site jointly owned by Oxfordshire County Council and Cala Homes.</p> <p>Part of the southern portion of the site, on the land owned by CALA Homes has been designated as an Ancient Monument by Historic England due to archaeological findings, which has paused the development, making delivery of the planned housing numbers no longer achievable.</p> <p>Officers at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) have met on several occasions with Officers and Members of West Oxfordshire District Council to review the options available to see what can be achieved by working collaboratively. From these meeting OCC Officers were tasked to liaise with the owners of the potential development site, to the east of the SDA site, north of London Road to see what could be achieved.</p> <p>From these meeting a potential option is being evolved that will be presented to WODC for discussion in next year that could open the opportunity to deliver the majority of the housing numbers identified in the SDA and the local plan. WODC will need to consider the proposal as part of the development of the next local plan and consider if the boundaries of the SDA can be adjusted, or whether the designation can be removed</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>The latest flooding incidents in Kidlington have exposed some weaknesses in local flood defences. Specifically the road drainage system</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Initial investigations indicate that there is a surface water sewer running along Mill Street which outfalls into the River Cherwell. This type of asset would typically have</p>

<p>on the junction between Mill Street and Evans Lane where surface water is supposed to drain into the Cherwell via a sump and valve system with equipment in place to prevent the river back-flowing on to the road.</p> <p>However during recent flooding events Mill Street has continued to flood putting businesses and homes at risk and regularly requiring the road to be closed. On some occasions the road floods when there has been little or no rain in the area which suggests the safeguards on backflow from the river are not working.</p> <p>Could the cabinet member please liaise with me to ascertain who is responsible for this infrastructure and help me press for it to be urgently inspected and repaired or upgraded?</p>	<p>a non-return valve, as you describe, and this system is believed to belong to Thames Water.</p> <p>It is possible that, in preventing the river from backing up the system and flooding the highway with river water, the non-return valve effectively shuts the highway drainage system down. Hence the continued highway flooding until river levels reduce and the non-return valve opens up again.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council would only be responsible for the gullies and gully connections to the surface water sewer.</p> <p>However, especially noting the observations made, further investigation is needed to confirm what is happening. Officers will arrange to check the highway drainage system and will contact Thames Water to ask them to check their apparatus. I have asked officers to keep you updated on this.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>As the Cabinet member is aware, I have been in protracted correspondence with officers about the deal struck with OUFC giving them an option to lease land in my division for a new stadium.</p> <p>While the details of the lease agreement have been kept secret, a side agreement known as the 'collaboration agreement', supposedly intended to tie OUFC to specific community commitments, was eventually made public earlier this year.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>Negotiations on a commercial transaction will usually need to take place in private and it is not unusual for the Council to agree to confidentiality clauses with commercial parties in order to protect their commercial interests or ours. The terms of this deal were agreed with the Leader and myself in keeping with the delegations provided by the Cabinet resolution.</p> <p>The fact that we have entered into an option for a lease is a matter of public record and we would not normally publish the terms and conditions of this type of legal agreement. The commitments of the football club to the community have been set out in the Community Collaboration agreement, which sets out contractual</p>

However, amongst numerous clauses many of which, in my and other's opinion, are poorly drafted and largely unenforceable, the clause dealing with financial and practical support for community and sports facilities had been completely redacted.

This appears to negate the publication of the agreement at a local level since details relating to whatever has been agreed between OUFC and OCC about community support is not visible to the very people who will be most impacted by the stadium should it go ahead.

Since the publication of the agreement I have made repeated requests for this clause to be unredacted, but have now been told that the council has agreed with OUFC not to do so as it's regarded as commercially sensitive. This is a bizarre statement since it can have no bearing on a commercial deal that has already been signed off by both parties. Furthermore any practical and financial support will have to be made public eventually as councils and other organisations in receipt will have to declare it in published accounts.

Does the cabinet member understand that it's seen by residents and stakeholders in my division as democratically obtuse for OCC to be making deals around community benefits without involving local community stakeholders in those negotiations, and that by continuing to deny them access to those details now we underline the clumsy and

obligations on the club. These commitments can only come into effect in the event that the club receives planning permission from Cherwell District Council.

The clause that the Councillor refers to has not been redacted in full as the question sets out.

In this case OUFC have asked us to maintain the confidentiality of certain legal provisions to protect their commercial interests.

As the club have recently stated, "With the planning submission likely to be considered in early 2025, the club are actively exploring alternative short-term provisions for the period between the lease at the Kassam Stadium expiring in 2026 and the new stadium being ready."

<p>overbearing approach that has characterised negotiations surrounding the leasing of public land in my division?</p>	
<p>13. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>Residents of three completed housing developments in my division which are still not adopted by the council, with some residents living in their homes for over 12 years. Those residents can't report anything like streetlights not working, flooding due to blocked drains, potholes, illegally parked cars and so on at FixMyStreet as they are still technically private roads.</p> <p>Can you please provide any reason why the council is taking so long to adopt these roads and provide residents with access to all council services?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Highway Agreements Team (HA Team) officers work closely with Developers to progress highway adoption agreements including assessment of design and construction across Oxfordshire. Adoption of key development in and around Didcot is a priority for the HA Team, with Great Western Park a key focus site. To this end, significant work is underway to progress the adoption of Sir Frank Williams Avenue and Greenwood Way, at the aforementioned development, which are key to unlocking ability to progress adoption for the remainder of the development.</p> <p>Highway adoption agreements can be complex and are often delayed by land matters, drainage vesting issues and lengthy problems with highway remedial works; such matters have all been experienced with key development sites in and around the Didcot area.</p> <p>Until adopted, carriageway and any associated apparatus, remains the responsibility of the Developer to maintain. It is the case that speed limit and parking restriction enforcement can be carried out on these private roads by the Police once a traffic regulation order (TRO) is implemented, which are in place for the Great Western Park development. The requirement is on the Developer to complete the roads to an adoptable standard, in addition to meeting all adoption criteria, before the roads become maintainable at the public expense.</p> <p>In order for a road to be adopted, it has to connect to existing highway and therefore the estate roads that may be offered for future adoption, cannot be adopted until any main development infrastructure (such as spine roads) become public highway.</p>

	<p>Adoption of the roads will also include apparatus such as streetlights, footways, drainage and verges that are adjacent to the road and associated with the highway.</p> <p>Developers are not obligated to offer their roads for adoption, neither are they required to have legal agreements in place prior to highway construction or property occupation. It is the case however, for major developments going forward, that adoption agreements are required as S106 obligation for key development infrastructure. This mechanism goes some way to ensuring timely signing of legal agreement for key infrastructure on some of the larger developments.</p> <p>The Highway Agreements Team will be happy to meet with you to discuss specific developments, their status in highway adoption terms and any planned future actions accordingly.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>Many residents of the completed 3,300 homes at the Great Western Park housing development in Didcot are angry at the high level of antisocial and illegal parking, cars completely ignoring double yellow lines and parking restrictions outside schools, along with blocking pavements and resident's driveways.</p> <p>I am repeatedly told that our civil parking enforcement officers cannot ticket cars on the estate as it's technically private roads while it remains unadopted and fines wouldn't be enforceable.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) can enforce double yellow lines on private roads if these are covered by a traffic regulation order (TRO). I can confirm that a TRO is in place for Great Western Park for the double yellow lines and therefore we are able to carry out civil enforcement.</p> <p>In the past, these have been enforced by Thames Valley Police however, we have recently instructed OCC's civil enforcement contractor to begin enforcement.</p>

<p>However, on the same estate we now have a bus gate with a new ANPR camera which is fining cars on the same unadopted private roads.</p> <p>Can the cabinet member explain why bus gate fines are enforceable on unadopted roads parking fines are not on the very same roads?</p>	
<p>15. COUNCILLOR IAN SNOWDON</p> <p>With winter approaching it's good to hear OCC has a new fleet of 30 new gritters hitting our county, but it's sad to hear that the entire fleet is diesel when there are electric options available with a range of 250km and a recharge time of just 2 hours.</p> <p>With Salt Barn producing its own electricity this would have been a good chance to lead by example in fighting the climate emergency and at least purchase a few electric vehicles for some of our urban streets.</p> <p>Can the cabinet member explain why the entire fleet had to be diesel and how this decision fits with the administration's priorities?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</p> <p>The new gritter fleet, as with the majority of fleet used for the delivery of the highway service, operate using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). HVO is a sustainable and renewable fuel which reduces CO2 emissions and pollutants.</p> <p>Provision of fully electric vehicles is under regular review as the technology and equipment to support this develops. Currently the provision of sufficient charging capacity at all operational depots is not available and would require a grid upgrade to be able to meet the charge requirement of a fully electric winter fleet. This, coupled with the cost of electric vehicles, meant that the most sustainable, modern, and cost-effective procurement of vehicles has been realised via the procurement of our new fleet.</p> <p>During periods of prolonged snow and ice when the gritters are operating 24/7 we would not be able to stop the service for the time taken to charge the vehicles, (likely to be many hours). During trials we have found that range and charging times can vary and are still not reliable or at the ranges and times required to be operationally efficient.</p> <p>The solar panels at Deddington depot will feed back into the grid but would not be enough on its own to power electric vehicles. The provision of charging points at all</p>

	<p>depots requires sufficient capacity from the grid. This capacity is not available in the near term but is being explored for the future. We are working with the corporate climate team to explore all available options. The lead time for this is in between 3 to 5 years based on National Grid feedback.</p> <p>The vehicles will run on HVO. There are also projects underway to explore use of Hydrogen fuel. One includes provision of a Hydrogen fuel station at Drayton Depot to trial three large goods vehicles (LGV). Provision of hydrogen converters which work in tandem with existing fuel systems are also being trialled as part of the new Highway Contract. These converter units can be installed to existing plant and reduces the consumption of standard fuels as well as reducing carbon.</p>
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