

Questions by Members – Council – 25 September 2024

<u>Written Question</u>	<u>Written Answer</u>	<u>Verbal Supplementary Question</u>	<u>Verbal Supplementary Answer</u>
Q1. Councillor Julian Cooper to Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning:			
<p>Can the Executive Member for Planning please update the Council on the progress of the Motion passed by Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee on 13 November 2023 concerning World Heritage Site buffer zones?</p>	<p>The request which was made which was made at the Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee on 13 November 2023, was as follows:</p> <p><i>‘That planning policy officers produce a full and comprehensive report on the Blenheim World Heritage Site, with comparisons made to other World Heritage Sites, to inform the Local Plan review process’.</i></p> <p>Given the time and resource implications of producing such a report, the Planning Policy Manager contacted Historic England to understand whether any such report and comparative analysis already exists.</p> <p>In their subsequent response, Historic England confirmed that there is no single report covering the broad scope of information being sought and that because there is so much detail within World Heritage Sites, higher-level abridgements tend not to be helpful or easy to produce.</p>	<p>In relation to the last paragraph, can we be assured a full report will be brought back to us, and not just me?</p>	<p><i>(answered by Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council)</i></p> <p>I’ll make sure Councillor Ashton gives you a written response.</p> <p>--</p> <p>Written response sent to Councillor Julian Cooper by Councillor Hugo Ashton, on 30 September 2024:</p> <p><i>“I have since spoken with the Council’s Planning Policy Manager, who has suggested that the summary overview document referred to, be shared with yourself initially and once you have had the opportunity to review, a view can then be formed on how it can most appropriately be taken forward.”</i></p>

	<p>It was therefore suggested that the scope of the request be clarified, and on this basis, Councillor Cooper was contacted by email on 3 July 2024.</p> <p>In his subsequent response of 18 July 2024, Councillor Cooper confirmed that he is particularly interested in the following world heritage sites:</p> <p>Liverpool Cornish Tin Mines Stonehenge Hadrian's Wall Lake District</p> <p>He drew particular attention to Liverpool which lost its World Heritage Status in 2021.</p> <p>Since then, a meeting has been held with Historic England on 22 July, the notes of which are now in the process of being provided to Councillor Cooper.</p> <p>The Planning Policy Team have also started to produce a summary overview document relating to Blenheim WHS and the other sites mentioned by Councillor Cooper in his email of 18 July.</p>		
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	This will be provided to Councillor Cooper by mid-October 2024.		
Q2. Councillor Andrew Coles to Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment:			
In light of a few complaints I have received recently regarding the way this Council manages its trees; in particular the trees on the Deer Park estate in Witney which overhang onto properties in Windrush Valley Road in my ward, and also the woodland at Loom Lane near the Old Bathing Place, would the Executive Member be willing to see that this Council undertakes a review of the Tree Management Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and meeting the needs of residents?	The Council's Tree Management Policy was adopted in 2019, and this will be reviewed in the next year.	N/A	N/A
Q3. Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development:			
Please can you update us on which Towns benefitted from the UK shared prosperity funding?	There are 5 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) funded projects that are specifically benefiting certain towns. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer Park South accessibility project and trail (Witney); • Carterton Strategic Plan (Carterton); • Hexagon refurb for shared working space (Witney); 	No, I won't ask a follow up here, but I would like to arrange a meeting with Councillor Enright is that's possible. --	Councillor Enright agreed to this request.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Towns Feasibility Study (All 7 Towns); • Town Centre improvements (Chipping Norton, with more to come). <p>I have provided a full breakdown of projects and the towns that are benefiting from the scheme, and this information is appended to the Member Questions document.</p> <p>Small Business Grants, whilst not directly benefiting, would have an economic impact felt throughout the district.</p>	<p>(Meeting arranged by Democratic Services for Councillors Mead and Enright, with Economic Development Officers, on Friday 18 October 2024.)</p>	
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Q4. Councillor Michele Mead to Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance:

<p>Quarter one figures show this council is already £250k overspent £91k of this is from people not buying green waste licenses can I ask will you consider reducing the cost of the license next year?</p>	<p>Income from green waste licenses in 2023/24 was £1,483,443. The latest figure for 2024/25 is £1,614,180.</p> <p>The average price of a green bin licence in Oxfordshire is £63.00. The council currently charges £50.00 which is the second lowest amount of all local authorities in the county.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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	Analysis of the adverse budget monitoring variances, in all areas, will be taken into consideration when setting the 2025/26 budget.		
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QUESTION 3 – UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND BENEFICIARIES

Project Lead	Status	Project name	Area benefitting
Abingdon & Witney College	Live	Developing careers in hospitality and care and green skills	Whole district
Cotswold Tourism	Live	Help to Thrive	Whole district – sector specific
Cotswold Tourism	Live	Navigate	Whole district – sector specific
Cotswold Tourism	Live	Sustainability Champions	Whole district – sector specific
FarmAbility	Live	FarmAbility	Whole district – by referral
North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster	Live	Feasibility study to develop a farmer-led abattoir, processing and cold supply chain.	Whole district – sector specific
OxLEP	Live	Spark programme	Whole district
OxLEP	Live	Accelerator programme	Whole district
OxLEP	Live	No Limits 3	Whole district
WODC Climate Action Team	Complete	Deer Park South accessibility project and trail	Witney
WODC Economic Dev Team	Complete	Small Business Grant Scheme	Whole district
WODC Economic Dev Team	Live	Carbon Action Fund	Whole district
WODC Planning and Eco Dev Team	Complete	Carterton Strategic Plan	Carterton
WODC Property and Estates	Live	Hexagon refurb for shared working space	Witney
WODC Planning and Eco Dev Team	Complete	Rural Services Feasibility Study	Whole district
WODC Economic Dev Team	Complete	Market Towns Feasibility Study	All 7x towns
WODC Communities Team	Live	WestHive – Communities Infrastructure Fund	Whole district
WODC Economic Dev Team	Live	Town centre improvements	To date: Chipping Norton