

Council

Monday 20 July 2026

Written Questions

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QUESTION ONE

Question From: Councillor Mark Cherry

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Lesley McLean

Topic: Former Garage Site, Bretch Hill

Question

“For over 2 years the former sanctuary housing garage site next to 230 Bretch hill is now on its third owner.

As a consequence, the old garage site has become unsafe dilapidated and prone to antisocial behaviour the Thames Valley neighbourhood police team and community wardens are doing all in their power to tackle this however the whole site needs redevelopment from the new owners and to be made secure.

As the leader of Cherwell District Council can you assure me as a Ruscote ward councillor that you will do all in your power as Cherwell leader to support the Cherwell environmental enforcement team who were trying to get the landowner to move forward with their legal responsibilities and improve the garage site for the local community of Bretch Hill.

Response from the Leader

“I would like to place on record my thanks to the Cherwell District Council Environmental Enforcement Team for their considerable efforts in securing this site. Through the use of a Community Protection Notice, together with sustained engagement and persistence, officers have worked to ensure that the current owners have taken action to address the issues. This has been particularly challenging as the ownership of the site has changed hands on at least two occasions, requiring the enforcement process to be restarted each time. The site has now been sealed at all three entrance points to deter unauthorised access, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping, thanks in no small part to the excellent work of James Fairweather, the lead case officer.

To address the longer term issue of the site and its future, as leader of the Council and portfolio holder for regeneration I will write to the landowner and invite them to describe their plans to us for redevelopment of the site.”

QUESTION TWO

Question From: Councillor Michael Wilson

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Lesley McLean

Topic: Neurodiversity Awareness Training

Question

“As a councillor with ADHD, I appreciate that the Council provides neurodiversity training through iHasco. Would the council consider offering in person neurodiversity awareness training to further understanding and support for neurodivergent councillors, staff and residents.

Would the Leader agree to investigate the benefits of face-to-face neurodiversity training and report back to councillors on the options available?”

Response from the Leader

“You have already highlighted that neurodiversity training is provided online via iHasco and I do hope that councillors have completed this. Face to face neurodiversity training is already offered to staff so I have asked our Democratic and Elections Team to work with our HR team and their provider to extend this to Members. This is a very important area and something I am committed to taking forward.”

QUESTION THREE

Question From: Councillor Eddie Reeves

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Lesley McLean

Topic: Area Oversight Groups

Question

“Earlier this year, Cherwell District Council agreed to allocate funding for Banbury and other parts of the district to support local development needs. Banbury will have £300,000 allocated through this Fund, for each of the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. These funds are to be welcomed.

Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) were set up as consultative, non-decision-making entities, and they are a forum in which to discuss local issues and opportunities and identify possible actions to address these through the development of an Area Priority Plan. Membership includes Cherwell District, Oxfordshire County and Banbury Town Councillors, officers and local stakeholders.

As Deddington ward members, Cllrs Rogers, McLernon and I appear to have been invited to attend meetings of the Banbury AOG. However, there appears to

be no mention of the possibility of any rural expenditure at all in the Council's invitation to participate or its attendant funding criteria.

Is this an unfortunate case of miscommunication on the Council's part or has a political decision been taken by the administration to expressly exclude rural wards from receiving a fair share of these important funds?"

Response from the Leader

"The Local Area Funds are for each of the three main urban centres and their surrounding areas meaning that the entire district has access to this funding.

Local Area Funds ensure that local ward councillors have the opportunity to be involved in an area framework that allows them to recommend proposals to the Executive to be funded to the benefit of their areas. All councillors are encouraged to bring forward proposals for future funding – initially through discussion with the relevant area officer team.

There is no exclusive list to the possibilities to the requests of the area funding groups, however, each request will be subject to the Council's standard checks on legal and financial implications and the Council's standing orders."

QUESTION FOUR

Question From: Councillor Paul Jeffreys

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Lesley McLean

Topic: Bins

Question

"The Council's policy is that when an existing 240-litre Green Waste Bin becomes damaged or reaches the end of its serviceable life, it is replaced with a smaller 180-litre bin, representing a 25% reduction in capacity.

Whilst residents are encouraged to recycle as much as possible, many common household waste items cannot be placed in the blue recycling bin, including kitchen roll, tissues, bedding, textiles, carrier bags, cling film, sweet wrappers, crisp packets, wet wipes and nappies. These items must therefore be disposed of in the Green Waste Bin.

For larger households, particularly those with young children generating nappy waste, a reduction of 25% in bin capacity can create significant difficulties. At the same time, the annual charge for the Brown Bin garden waste service has increased from £49 to £59 over the last three years. Many residents may be concerned that increasing charges could discourage the proper disposal of garden waste and lead to more waste being placed in Green Waste Bins.

Can the Leader explain what assessment the Council has undertaken of the impact of replacing 240-litre Green Waste Bins with 180-litre bins on larger households and families with young children, whether there are any plans to reduce the size of the Brown Bin from 240 litres to 180 litres, and whether the

Council will consider reducing or removing the Brown Bin charge in order to encourage greater use of the service?"

Response from the Leader

"I want to reassure you that this is not a new policy. It was implemented almost a decade ago, as part of the council's wider drive towards increasing recycling levels in Cherwell, and bins have been replaced steadily as they reach end of life or new bins are requested. Reducing the size of the bins directly increases our levels of recycling. This is better for the environment and better financially for Cherwell.

During the last decade, the Council has only received a very small number of complaints about bin capacity. Data shows that most green bins aren't full when we collect them, and that half of what goes in the green bins could go into recycling. We've continually expanded what we can pick up in the recycling bin over the last two years, and we will be increasing that again in the coming year. We have a long way to go before capacity of the green bins is a challenge for us. I would also stress that larger families do receive the bigger 240L bins from us as standard, as we know how much rubbish a new baby generates!

In terms of the brown bin garden waste, I can assure you that our sampling shows almost no garden waste is being put into the green bins. Our garden waste service is still the second cheapest in Oxfordshire, and almost half the cost of garden waste in Oxford for example, so I think we are still delivering great value for money for our residents.

Almost all councils in the UK charge for garden waste collection, the money raised supports council activities, if we were to lower this charge we would have to substantially reduce our work to make Cherwell cleaner and safer.

We are definitely not planning to change the size of the garden waste bin - that wouldn't help increase our recycling levels, and so would have no benefit. I can assure you that the brown bin will be the same size as it always was under our administration."