

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.

Questions	Answers
<p>1. COUNCILLOR BOB JOHNSTON</p> <p>What is the status of rail (both heavy and light) in respect of LTP4, given that all reference to them was deleted at the July Cabinet meeting?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>This is going to be covered in the report to Council (8 September) on LTP4. The relevant extract is as follows:</p> <p>“The addendum to Cabinet outlined our strategic priorities and ambition for rail investment in Oxfordshire. Extensive consultation took place on the 2012 Strategy and work to revise this is substantially complete. The updated Strategy is proposed to be finalised this autumn, for stakeholder consultation and further consideration/amendment, before being submitted for approval as part of the LTP4 update in spring 2016.”</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Given that spring is somewhat a slippery concept and can be defined variously would the Cabinet Member like to indicate which is the most likely meeting of Cabinet and Council that the revised proposals can come to?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Well it will be as soon as it's actually been prepared. Hopefully this will be towards the end of the year and then through the Cabinet and Council after that at the earliest opportunity.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Cutting £6 million from the subsidies from bus services will be undoubtedly mean that certain services especially in rural areas and</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The capital funding investment being used to improve the road network is coming from Central Government, developments, or the Local Enterprise Partnership to support and enable Oxfordshire's future growth. It is generally the result of</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>the Dial a Ride network are in danger of closure. Does the Cabinet Member for Transport agree with me that there is something seriously wrong when the County is spending millions on road widening schemes, redesigning roundabout and building ever more park and rides whilst at the same time turning its back on public transport and its obvious advantages in transport planning , pollution control and carbon emissions?</p>	<p>specific bids to government which have clear growth outcomes linked to it and cannot be spent on other areas of council business. In many instances these schemes will provide improved bus service journeys. The Council's Local Transport Plan is very much focused on improving and investing in the bus network creating conditions and maximising levels of patronage to ensure bus services can be operated on a commercial basis.</p> <p>With continuing financial pressures the Council cannot justify or sustain investing its limited revenue funding year on year into subsidising Bus Services. Ensuring accessibility for those in rural areas is a challenge and one we recognise - we must look at different way and model of providing this. The Council currently supports approximately 9% of the bus network, the remainder being run on a commercial basis, and it is committed to supporting rural communities within the financial constraints that it has. We have made a lot of progress on this through the community transport project but a significant proportion of this support needs to be through providing an environment where the commercial bus network can grow so that it does not place an on-going burden on the tax payers of Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Do you not think it is a contrast that here we are making £6m worth of cuts to subsidies to our buses while at the same time we seem to have a pot of money for redesigning roundabouts, widening roads and a new range of park and rides, everything to do with developing car support in the County Council. Isn't it sad that we have a situation where public transport is being cut and private car travel is actually being encouraged?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Councillor Williams will be aware that there is an A40 consultation going on which will include a possibility of a dedicated bus lane from Eynsham to the Wolvercote Roundabout area. We are in a position where we are encouraging and chasing economic development in this County which brings in central government money, which is where the major infrastructure works are being carried out. This doesn't preclude choice being built into any of the programmes and he will know from LTP4, which we will be discussing later on today, that actually choice is foremost in that particular programme which allows for people to use buses, cars, trains, river if they want to and walk and cycle.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>3. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member for Transport indicate how many full time designated cycle officer are members of the dedicated transport infrastructure planning team? Could the Portfolio Holder take into account that most local authorities have cycle officers (Coventry have 6) as a part of the senior design team and without them cycling is always an afterthought with a constant and supreme priority for cars.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The simple answer is the Council has no full time, designated cycle officers. However, this is because cycling, along with other specific modes of transport is part of the role of all the transport planners. They are expected to consider what we can do to promote/encourage and deliver infrastructure for cyclists, in both planning and design teams, ensuring cycling is not an afterthought. Most schemes we build tend to have a cycling element or have indirect benefits for cyclists and we have been very successful in attracting funding through this model. This has been the Council's approach for some years.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Given the stated ambition for cycling developments in the forthcoming transport plan does he not think that the lack of a dedicated cycling officer is quite concerning and could he attempt to quantify perhaps what the collective knowledge within the general planners that we do have, for example does that equal 1 dedicated cycling officer?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We do not have a dedicated cycling officer for the reason that we want all the officers to look holistically at all the options that are available and not just at any one particular option which is why we don't have people dedicated for any other the schemes that we are doing they are all cross-cutting.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member comment on the recently issued figures from the Department of Transport which show that Oxfordshire is now far behind Cambridgeshire in its monthly</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>A number of significant measures are being put in place to create the foundation for cycling to be a major model of travel in Oxfordshire. The new Oxfordshire Cycling Strategy forms an integral part of Connecting Oxfordshire: Local</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>cycle usage rates (30% Cambridge and 24% Oxfordshire). Could he outline what measures are being implemented to narrow this significant gap?</p>	<p>Transport Plan 2015-2031 (LTP4), alongside Area Strategies which set out specifically what will be implemented in these areas. It has been written in close collaboration with the Oxfordshire Cycle Network (a county-wide network of cycle campaigners) and our colleagues from Public Health and Countryside. Here are some of the measures that we will be putting in place:</p> <p>1. A Quality Infrastructure We will identify a series of strategic routes in collaboration with users, which we will develop into Cycle Premium Routes and Cycle Super Routes, which will become the focus of our future investment. Over time, local cycle networks will be upgraded to Connector Routes, which will enable safe, signed routes throughout the county as well as providing links to the Cycle Premium Routes and Cycle Super Routes</p> <p>2. Cycling as part of a Journey Cycling alone cannot replace the car for long journeys but a combination of cycle-rail or cycle-bus can. We will create better links between our developing cycle network and popular public transport hubs with safe and secure cycle parking available – not just in the obvious places such as rail stations, but also at main stops on key bus routes.</p> <p>3. New Developments In September 2013, Oxfordshire Councillors approved a motion that included requiring cycle-friendly measures into all new road schemes and housing developments. For large, new or expanded housing developments, developers must demonstrate through master planning how their site has been planned to make cycling convenient and safe for cyclists and must be constructed with cycling in mind. We will ask developers to fund cyclability audits so that local users can evaluate the quality of existing cycle routes and how they could be improved.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p data-bbox="880 225 1637 256">4. Providing a Safe and Well Maintained Network</p> <p data-bbox="880 264 2029 576">Evidence shows that sharing narrow carriageway space with fast moving vehicles is why most people will not cycle on the carriageway. We will provide more segregated cycle lanes and other measures such as advance stop lines at junctions. We will consider lower speed limits and other traffic calming measures. Where space is not available, we will seek to sign cyclists along safer route options. A safe cycle network is also a well-maintained cycle network. Given limited resources, we will identify a list of priorities for maintenance on key cycle routes.</p> <p data-bbox="880 627 1346 659">5. Encourage People to Cycle</p> <p data-bbox="880 667 2029 1023">Even in cycling cities like Oxford and Cambridge, the majority of people do not cycle regularly. We want to make people feel that cycling is something for them. In collaboration with the Oxfordshire Cycle Network, we will develop options to support new or returning cyclists to build confidence in all aspects of cycling. In collaboration with our Public Health colleagues, we will promote cycling to people who are concerned about their health and fitness. We are also currently exploring ways of expanding the extremely successful pilot OXONBIKE cycle hire scheme serving Thornhill, Headington and Cowley to cover the whole city - and possibly beyond.</p> <p data-bbox="880 1070 1245 1102">6. Implementation Plan</p> <p data-bbox="880 1110 2029 1262">In summary, cycling is a vital component of the council's transport policy. A number of cycle schemes are underway to strengthen infrastructure and encourage more people to cycle. Provision for cyclists will continue to play a key role in planning for growth across Oxfordshire.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Can I also ask you if you would consider talking to your colleagues in Cambridge about how they have maintained such high cycling rates and how we can seek to do the same?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I have a cousin in Cambridge who was Leader of the City Council at one time. I will talk to him and I do meet him regularly.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Is the Leader of the Council concerned that all meeting of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership are held in secret with no members of the public and even County councillors excluded? How does the Leader who sometimes attends the LEP defend this lack of accountability in view of the Government's stance that as the LEP is spending public money LEPs are liable to an 'assurance framework' on their website that includes openness and transparency? How can the other Nolan Principles of Public Life such as honesty and objective leadership be affirmed if all meetings are secret?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The tone of the question by Cllr Williams is trying to give the impression that the LEP is some sort of secretive organisation that is spending tax payer's money. I would suggest that Cllr Williams reads through all the documentation of the LEP website. The LEP was set up by the coalition government and operates under the relevant regulations. He will see that all democratically elected members of the 6 councillors are members of the LEP and therefore the democratic accountability sits firmly with them. I'm not sure what Cllr Williams is trying to say about my attendance when he uses the word 'sometimes' as I have attended 21 of the 25 meeting since I've been Leader. The partnership report debated at today's Council meeting gives all members the opportunity to ask questions regarding this successful partnership.</p> <p>He will also see that the LEP has been successful in obtaining funding deals worth over £200 million the benefits of which are already seen on the Southern approaches. Is Councillor Williams suggesting that this funding of vital infrastructure in Oxfordshire is something that he and the Green Party would not support?</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that meetings which are not open to the public, where you can only get the minutes two months after they have been approved by</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I think there are two questions there and I am happy to answer both of them. First of all, 'No' regarding the first question. Secondly, if the way the government is producing funding, which is absolutely vital to Oxfordshire, comes through a local enterprise partner, then I am happy to support that because it is based on</p>

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<p>the following meeting is not transparency and the LEP is a classic example of a closed quango? Would he agree with me that really we should have that money?</p>	<p>everything that is coming forward. The Local Transport Plan 4, which we are going to be discussing later, is embedded in everything, and if you look at what we have had for the last 20 years in Oxfordshire, everybody has been crying out for more infrastructure development. In last 18-24 months we have actually started to deliver. We have had £200million worth of infrastructure investment through the local enterprise partnership and I think that is a good thing for Oxfordshire because just look at everything that is going on. Yes there are traffic road works, but at the southern roundabout traffic is flowing easily, Green Road, traffic flowing easily through there. We will have the same through Oxfordshire and if that is the governments of the day preferred route then so be it. I will work with the LEP to make sure we get the funding that the residents of Oxfordshire and the businesses of Oxfordshire need to thrive.</p>
<p>6. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>There have been numerous suggestions in this Council County Chamber about how to lobby the Government against further cuts in the level of rates support grant in the name of the 'Austerity' Programme most of which have been rejected or amended into impotence.</p> <p>Could I ask what you have actually done so far to formally lobby members of the Government on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council that the long term programme of cuts set out in 2010, the cuts announced in June 2015 and the further cuts expected in the Autumn Statement are more than this Council can take without devastating consequences to services? Does he agree that crocodile tears are not enough?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I can confirm that every time I have been formally asked a council meeting to write to government I do so. There are frequent briefings to the local MPs that contain the financial details of the council. The deficit reduction is a national issue and we are full members of LGA and CCN who make the case on behalf of us and their other members, as do officers through their own networks.</p> <p>At every opportunity when I meet MPs I always make them aware of not just Oxfordshire funding situation but that of all councils across the UK. I do not see the difference between a formal or informal meeting; in fact I would say that an informal meeting offers a better opportunity to get a point across. I do not see the point of going back through my diary over the last 5 years bringing forward a list of times I have met MPs or government ministers but I can assure Cllr Coates that I do talk frequently about our financial situation.</p> <p>I would like to remind Cllr Coates that on 7 May 2015 the country elected a Conservative government that has a clear aim of reducing the country's deficit. This will mean we all will have to prioritise the funding resources to those most vulnerable in our society. What the country clearly rejected was the fantasy</p>

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	policies of the Green party that would simply rack up even more debt that would only be passed on to our children.
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Has the Leader had any representations to the Government specifically about the forthcoming spending review and the money for local government that will come out of that?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Yes.</p>
<p>7. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>What assurances can you give the parents and children who use Grandpont Children's Centre and Donnington Doorstep family centre about the future provision of open-access support for parents and children in my division?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>I do not wish to pre-empt the Consultation process, by answering this question. I need to keep an open mind for the results of the Consultation process.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>It is perfectly clear from the document that has been published for Cabinet that Councillor Tilley can give no assurances to the parents in my division or anywhere else in Oxfordshire about Children's Centres staying open because it is her intend to close them?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I thought I have written that in my answer, I thought I had answered his question. Until the consultation is completed, I cannot answer questions like that and Councillor Tanner should know better. I always do my best to answer questions.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>8. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Does the Cabinet member agree with me that the popular Redbridge Recycling Centre in my division should continue to remain open following the consultation on the savage cuts to recycling centres around Oxfordshire?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Councillor Tanner is being very premature in the use of such words as “savage” and “cuts”, when the consultation process has barely even started. The main aim of the process is to have a strategy in place to allow S106 to be collected to improve and replace [as necessary] our Household Waste and Recycling Centres. All areas of the County council have been asked to identify savings in preparation for the coming year’s budgets, with a target of £350K to come from HWRC’s. Should this mean the number of sites be reduced to 3 or 4, then the aim will be to place them in reach of all – a centre in or around the City will certainly be needed, although I fail to see why Cllr Tanner should think his Division should be privileged above all others.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member not agree with me that he ought to know that Redbridge Recycling Centre, as the biggest and the most successful in the County, is absolutely vital that it should continue and it is just fortuitous that it is in my division?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am aware whose division the Redbridge Recycling is.</p>
<p>9. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>How bad does the road surface of the heavily used Folly Bridge in Oxford have to become before the County Council takes seriously its responsibility to keep that (and other road surfaces) at a decent level for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council is currently in the process of programming investigatory work to Folly Bridge, St Aldates. This work is necessary in order to add the bridge surface to our forward programme of carriageway patching. The investigatory work includes digging trial pits on the bridge to ascertain the (build-up of bituminous layers), details of the existing construction and to gain certainty on the locations and depths of utility services. The trial pits will also give evidence of any potential water ingress to the bridge deck and will assist in</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>determining the specification of the most suitable (re-surfacing material) type of repair. Following these investigations, it is anticipated that the necessary work to Folly Bridge will be undertaken early next financial year. Until this work is completed, Folly Bridge is inspected each month as part of the St Aldates inspection route. Any safety defects identified during these inspections will be remedied as per our inspection policy.</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR SURINDER DHESI</p> <p>What is the County Council doing to encourage more children to participate in the free school meals uptake?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>Free school meals are, of course, of immediate benefit to the children and families entitled to them, both from a financial and nutritional (and therefore learning) point of view.</p> <p>They are, also, of immediate financial benefit to schools as the principal determinant of the Pupil Premium; the more children at a school in receipt of free school meals (under the original free school meal mechanism as distinct from the new Universal Free School meal entitlement) the more pupil premium the school will receive.</p> <p>Headteachers and governors are very well aware of the importance of all of these benefits, not least the financial ones and, generally, do all they can at a local level to maximise take up.</p> <p>It is, of course, for parents to decide whether they wish to apply for free school meals and it would be difficult to come up with just one initiative for increasing uptake that would work for all schools where take up is low given the many and various barriers to take up from school to school, many of which flow from parents' perceptions.</p> <p>Colleagues in Facilities Management are working with individual schools, the Food With Thought catering team and other catering providers to try and identify which barriers are relevant to which schools. They intend to send out a survey to</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>all parents (via schools where the take up is below 80%) to help establish the causes of low take up.</p> <p>Of the 89 schools identified as having a take up of lower than 80% (measured at the January Census day), 65 have been referred back to the DfE Task Force and have received / will receive an individual visit from an advisor who will work with the school and the catering company to produce a report outlining potential solutions for that particular school. This will be particularly useful in the schools where there is limited enthusiasm from the staff for the Universal Free School Meals initiative. When these visits have been completed we shall be in a position to decide whether an 'all schools' initiative would be beneficial.</p> <p>In addition, some works have been taking place over the summer and into this term to help address some barriers already identified. Examples include new kitchens, additional or new tables, upgraded servery equipment aimed at improving the quality of food offer and the dining experience.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Have we contacted other councils to find out about their response and how they have increased their uptake please?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We have been talking to other Councils about what they do, but there is very little that we can actually do, it is up to schools although we are helping schools to get the message out to parents that they need to sign up for this. It is a very difficult problem, people will make their own decisions, we can't clap them in irons and send them to schools and say you will have a free lunch. So we do talk to other councils all the time about how they doing it.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Please can you tell us what is happening about the "Tri-Counties" proposal?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The title has changed to England's Economic Heartland to enable other councils to join. I am pleased to say that a joint letter supported by OxLEP has been sent to the Chancellor and Secretaries of State outlining the proposal, I attach a copy.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>My reason for a larger alliance has always been clear. The number one transport issue which affects all the councils in Oxfordshire is the A34, as any incident has a knock-on effect across the network, as I'm sure Cllr Presell is only too aware. I first asked the Secretary of State for Transport about local control three years ago, as I believe we can find a better local solution. However as we're only talking about 30 miles of road, then it's always going to be a challenge, due to economies of scale etc. By joining together with the councils, we have a larger offer of trunk roads to work together on. We currently have indicative funding of £35 million for the junctions at Peartree & Botley, with around £15 million for Lodge Hill. Then there is the additional junction on the M40 near Bicester. This brings the funding to around £100 million, yes the proposed work will ease the traffic by increasing the capacity but it won't be the final solution. However, if we use the funds to work on an alternative solution linking into the Oxford-Cambridge expressway, we may be able to achieve greater funding and find a more permanent solution to the A34 that would enable business to flourish within Oxfordshire.</p> <p>I am a strong supporter of an Oxfordshire Devolution proposal as I see the two deals as complementing each other rather than competing.</p> <p>Chancellor of the Exchequer England's Economic Heartland 1 Horse Guards Road Programme Office LONDON Buckinghamshire County Council SW1A 2HQ County Hall</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Walton Street Aylesbury HP20 1UA</p> <p>Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 2 Marsham Street LONDON SW1P 4DF</p> <p>Secretary of State for Transport Great Minster House 33 Horseferry Road LONDON</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p data-bbox="880 221 1464 245">Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills</p> <p data-bbox="880 253 1061 344">1 Victoria Street London SW1H 0ET</p> <p data-bbox="880 379 1032 421">29th July 2015</p> <p data-bbox="880 461 1319 485">Dear Chancellor and Secretaries of State</p> <p data-bbox="880 525 1980 549">England’s Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance: Strategic Transport and Infrastructure Proposition</p> <p data-bbox="880 588 2016 646">The Strategic Alliance of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire is delighted to submit our Strategic Transport and Infrastructure Proposition.</p> <p data-bbox="880 686 2011 810">We are at the heart of science and technological innovation in the UK. With a population of 1.9m and an economy valued at £48bn, we are an economic powerhouse that matches any outside of London. Our economic success comes not from having a single dominant city rather it comes from our network of innovators and entrepreneurs for whom an efficient transport system is vital.</p> <p data-bbox="880 850 2027 943">Our productivity is 30% higher than traditional city-regions: investment in new jobs generates 40% higher return. However, these impressive figures mask a simple fact: to be truly competitive requires investment in order to boost our productivity to match the levels of our global competitors.</p> <p data-bbox="880 983 2027 1075">Our proposition sets out how the County Councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships are working together on strategic infrastructure to realise the potential of our economy to grow by 20% by 2020 – delivering an additional £9bn per annum for the UK economy.</p> <p data-bbox="880 1115 1688 1139">Our proposition is unique in terms of the scale of its ambition and its offer.</p> <p data-bbox="880 1179 2029 1335">We can reduce the costs of infrastructure projects by up to 40% and accelerate their delivery by a third by simplifying our processes, removing duplication and realising efficiencies in the use of the technical skills available to us. We will deliver investment faster and more efficiently, make the funding available work harder and are engaging with our Local Planning Authorities to ensure that our transport proposition contributes to accelerating the delivery of new jobs and homes.</p> <p data-bbox="880 1375 2016 1433">Moreover, following a meeting in Central Bedfordshire’s offices last week, we have opened up a very positive conversation with our neighbouring Unitary authorities, and have agreed with them that we will</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>rapidly develop the Alliance proposition further so as to create an even bigger and more powerful offer for England's Economic Heartland.</p> <p>Our proposition is submitted with the intent of securing a new deal with Government on strategic transport that will enable England's Economic Heartland to beat even stronger.</p> <p>We look forward to having an early discussion with you and your officials as part of your wider considerations ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Cllr Martin Tett Cllr Ian Hudspeth Cllr Jim Harker Leader Leader Leader Buckinghamshire County Council Oxfordshire County Council Northamptonshire County Council</p> <p>Alex Pratt Adrian Shooter John Markham Chairman Chairman Chairman Buckinghamshire Local Oxfordshire Local Northamptonshire Enterprise Enterprise Partnership Enterprise Partnership Partnership</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>At the beginning of the reply that I had from the Leader he says that the joint letter was supported by the Oxfordshire LEP but is it not the case that the LEP declined to support it, but the Chairman went ahead and signed the letter anyway without authority and I also wondered if there has been a reply to the letter that was sent in July?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The Chairman of the LEP was carrying out his responsibilities of the LEP Board.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>12. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Five year old children in Oxfordshire have a very high incidence of tooth decay, compared with other similar counties. Please can you tell us why this is and what we are doing about it?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR HILARY HIBBERT-BILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR</p> <p>The latest available data on oral health of 5 year old children in Oxfordshire is from a survey in 2012/12 as part of a National programme of surveys. This data was discussed in the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 18 September 2014, the report of which is publicly available.</p> <p>The average number of decayed, missing and filled teeth (d3mft) for 5yr old children in Oxfordshire is 0.98, which overall is statistically similar than national levels (d3mft = 0.94).</p> <p>The mean number of 5yr olds with decayed, missing or filled teeth in Oxfordshire has increased slightly in 2011/12, however is this based on a smaller sample size (approximately 26% of all 5yr olds).</p> <p>Cherwell and Oxford City continue to have higher than the national average in terms of numbers of decayed, missing and filled teeth for 5yr olds.</p> <p>The rate of decay in 5yr old children in West Oxfordshire increased since the last survey. It is thought that this increase is likely due to a statistical anomaly created by the sampling methods used for surveying the children.</p> <p>The mean for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse is lower than England.</p> <p>The County Council let an improved contract for prevention commencing 1 April 2015 which in collaboration with wider dental services aims to contribute to prevention oral health problems in children. The priorities of this service are detailed in the most recent Director of Public Health annual report.</p> <p>The Public Health Directorate recommend that all young children should regularly attend a dentist from when teeth first begin to appear in the mouth. As</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>such the council advocates parents to consult their local dentist for advice and guidance on the oral health needs of their child.</p> <p>The responsibility of the commissioning of dental services lies with the NHS England Local Area Team. We would advise the councillor to contact the NHS England LAT if they wish to have information on the delivery of local clinical dental services.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>On the question of oral health I am sure that people would agree that under 5's are critical and wonder if the Cabinet Member can tell us what the role is of the Children's Centres in promoting oral health for the under 5's?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I think children's centres do promote oral health but in actual fact it is the responsibility of the NHS not this Council. We are a monitoring organisation.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Please can you tell us how many two-year olds in Oxfordshire currently have a place in a nursery school or other setting? How does this compare with other counties?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>The local authority does not keep records of all two year-olds attending childcare provision (parents paying fees). On-going records are kept of two year-olds accessing local authority 'funded' places. In the summer term, 2015, there were 1428 children taking up a place from a possible eligible cohort of 1900. This represents 74% take-up across nursery schools, children's centres, pre-schools, day-care and childminders. For take-up, Oxfordshire is 45th of the 152 local authorities.</p> <p>In June 2015, Oxfordshire was sixth of the 19 South East local authorities ranked by percentage take-up of funded two year-old places. Average take-up was 64%.</p> <p>Compared with statistical neighbours, Oxfordshire was fifth. Buckinghamshire was the highest at 78%, and average take-up was 71%.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>The DfE sends ranked score-cards to local authorities on a termly basis. Oxfordshire has performed well throughout the process with percentage take-up consistently in the 70s.</p> <p>The majority of funded two year-olds in Oxfordshire attend private or voluntary childcare provision although local authority teams are proactive in encouraging schools to develop provision for two year-olds with some positive results.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>From the answer I gather that about 500 children are eligible for a funded place but don't have one, this is the 2 year olds, and I wondered if we have been able to analyse why they are not taking up their full funded place and if we agree that this is vital for educational attainment how can we increase the awareness of the families as to the benefits of these places for all 2 year olds who are eligible and how we can increase the take up by those who want a place.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am afraid that parental choice is part of this and believe it or not, some families prefer to have their children at home between 2 and 3 particularly so I don't see what we can actually do about this, because they have a choice, we can provide the places if parents require it, we know that.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Clearly the present guidance on School admissions and Appeal is focused on the direct well-being of the child but would the Portfolio holder agree that domestic circumstances such as a registered disabled parents put under stress or unable to cope by the decision to refuse a place must be taken into account for that too can have an</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>The School Admissions Code of Practice is quite restrictive in terms of what factors can be included in over-subscription criteria and specifically excludes a number relating to things such as parental income, education, hobbies or previous activities. Parental disability isn't referred to either as an allowable factor nor as one which is prohibited. However, any over-subscription criterion must be "reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation." [para 1.8 of the Code]. It is difficult to think of such a criterion that could be applied where only one parent</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>influence on the child's future happiness?</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member for Children and Education to write on behalf of the Council to the Secretary of State for Education to seek a review of the Guidance Codes sent to local Authorities and the Independent School Admission Appeal Members which addresses the Councils concern?</p>	<p>has a significant disability. Where both parents have a disability that would prevent them walking their child to school, the Council would provide free transport even if the journey were under the statutory walking distance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="887 368 1984 437">□ The over-subscription criteria for most schools do, however, give priority to <i>children</i> with disabilities where physically accessing the school is an issue. <li data-bbox="887 480 2029 954">□ Appeals are considered by Independent Appeal Panels. Where these are 'class size appeals' (those where the class already has 30 children) there are only very limited circumstances in which the appeal can be upheld. Essentially it comes down to whether there was an administrative error by the Council which, had it not occurred, would have resulted in the child being allocated a school place. In 'class size appeals' there is no weighing of the parents' & child's circumstances against the impact that an additional child would have on the efficient operation of the school. The 'Infant Class Size Limit' means that if a 31st child were admitted the school would need to take 'qualifying measures' which would include having to employ an additional teacher at a cost of at least £30,000 p.a. against additional pupil funding of around £4,000 p.a. In the absence of maladministration this cost is sufficient basis to reject the appeal. <li data-bbox="887 997 2018 1249">□ I understand from officers that the current Admissions Code of Practice is being reviewed and the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, has said that the priority given to siblings is being looked at as this has emerged as a national issue with growing numbers of families having to send their children to different schools. I will ask him whether he thinks that parental disabilities should also be considered in relation to either or both of the admissions and appeals processes.
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>At the moment there are some vagaries as to whether the existing criteria actually do cover</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The admissions policy at the moment states that if there is one able bodied parent, then we do not have to take the disability of the other into consideration.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>parental disability and there may be legal challenge that the County is not abiding by its legal responsibilities. Could she comment on as to whether the County Council would fight that particular stance if it was brought forward by a parent in a legal dispute?</p>	<p>In the case you are talking about, I think the letter needs to go. It is already written and is upstairs waiting for me to sign it until you had asked your question. So I will do that but the criteria at the moment does say that we can look at one able bodied parent. If both are disabled then we will take the children to school.</p>
<p>15. COUNCILLOR NEVILLE HARRIS</p> <p>The report of November 14th 2014 (published 19th January 2015) Strategic Financial Case for a Unitary Authority raised again the opportunity for a discussion with a view to determination of how the interests of the residents of Oxfordshire could be best served in terms of streamlined effective, efficient and equitable local government. Does the Leader agree that, as laudable as such discussion and determination would be, no meaningful attempt to promote them has followed the report's publication?</p> <p>Please advise me on how you think a referendum might be organised by OCC which would enable the views of the County's residents to be expressed with regard to their various elected councillors seriously embarking on such worthwhile discussions. The multiplicity of tax gathering decision makers and resulting different levels of taxation puzzle many, as does the absence of a single planning authority. No less puzzling is the plethora of senior officers, accounts</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The purpose of commissioning the report was to establish the various saving that could potentially be realised from the various options of local government within Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The idea of a referendum is an interesting suggestion but we must bear in mind that there would be a cost of around £600,000. Whatever the outcome of a referendum the Government are clear that they would not allow a reorganisation of Local Government unless all parties agreed.</p> <p>I am willing to talk to Councillor Harris or any councillor about saving taxpayers money.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>departments, public relations teams and many other examples of needless plurality.</p> <p>People do understand how reactive those whose jobs might be in jeopardy and those whose political influence might be reduced or removed might be. Accordingly could you give particular attention as to how potential vested interest could be minimised if not excluded from such discussions?</p> <p>Do you also agree that any discussion on the form and shape of local government for Oxfordshire would be challenging and that a referendum with its possible accompanying campaigns for a yes or no vote would put before Oxfordshire's residents all of the arguments and counter arguments for both sides of the proposition.</p> <p>Would he further agree to talk to me and any other interested County, District or City Councillor on how such a referendum might be best arranged and worded.</p>	
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Will he take the initiative in organising a meeting of interested Councillors from across the County to further the proposals that are implicit in my question?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Yes I would be more than happy arrange a meeting with Councillor Harris and any other members of the Council to look at ways of reducing the burden on tax payers.</p>

Questions	Answers
16. COUNCILLOR SURINDER DHESI How much money is spent in repairing persistent potholes?	COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT The Council's contract requires a 2 year guarantee on any defect repair and so the Council do not pay any additional money for repair of persistent potholes.
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION How often do we monitor works of quality on the potholes.	SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER We have a regime of inspecting the repairs when they have been completed. We have a regime for checking the condition of the roads on a regular basis and assessing the requirement for dealing with potholes and a regime for monitoring the potholes once the work has been completed before a contractor is paid.