

CABINET – 28 NOVEMBER 2017

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions received from the following Members:

1. Councillor Howson to Councillor Constance

“The speed humps installed 25 years ago in Kingston Road, when Honorary Alderman Dermot Roaf was county councillor for that part of North Oxford, are no longer an effective deterrent, partly due to higher ground clearances in modern commercial and private vehicles. Since the closure of Beaumont Street, after the fire at the Randolph Hotel, the St Margaret’s Road and Kingston Road route to Worcester Street has become a favoured alternative route through Oxford. This has resulted in more speeding vehicles on Kingston Road, despite the traffic calming measures already in place.

Would the Cabinet Member ask officials to conduct both a speed check of traffic using Kingston Road and also to devise a scheme to reinforce the speed humps in order to deter through traffic and the users of the road that regularly ignore the speed limit. Any scheme should also aim to make the road safer for the many cyclists that currently use it.”

Answer

“The regular monitoring of traffic flows on Kingston Road undertaken shows no obvious upward trend in recent years. However, there is no recent speed survey data so I will commit to getting this carried out. Before any commitment can be made as to whether or not to implement initiatives to help manage speed though, I would wish to see the results of this speed survey.”

2. Councillor Emily Smith to Councillor Hudspeth

"How will elected members and members of the public be involved in the development of the Joint Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire? Given that the County, City and Districts have different community involvement policies, which body will be responsible for coordinating public engagement to ensure consultation is meaningful and the process is transparent?"

Answer

Appropriate decision-making arrangements for developing the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) have yet to be finalised; an appropriate governance structure will be jointly devised by the County and District Councils, through the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

The JSSP will be a statutory plan and therefore subject to statutory consultation. A Joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be

developed in the early stage of the plan-making process; this will set out the detailed consultation plan and consultation will be required to be undertaken at the following stages:

- The scoping of evidence, in particular the Strategic Environmental Assessment
- The scoping of the key issues facing Oxfordshire and the options for addressing them
- Preferred options & emerging strategy
- The draft pre-submission (Reg19) plan – ahead of the JSSP being submitted to the Inspectorate for examination

3. Councillor Roberts to Councillor Hudspeth

"Does the Leader of the Council consider the £150 million identified for infrastructure in the Budget to be adequate, given the current congestion on our roads, and the number of houses that are planned for Oxfordshire?"

Answer

The £150m funding for infrastructure, though very welcome, is a starting point in terms of being able to support Oxfordshire's growth – it will help get us through the next few years, but we have a longer term plan based around our newly agreed Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy which sets out what we need beyond that. The funding is spread over a 5 year period and we will be working with our City and District partners to obtain the best value for money. This is a clear indication from Central government that it recognises that Oxfordshire councils can work together to deliver infrastructure; I am confident that this will boost our chances of being successful in the future.

4. Councillor Roz Smith to Councillor Gray

"I am pleased that decisions on the local community fund grant applications were devolved to locality boards, although the fact that the published deadline differed from what was originally communicated for Oxford did cause unnecessary confusion. Could the cabinet member explain how, and by whom, expenditure of the grant monies will be monitored, against what was proposed in each applicant's grant application."

Answer

"I understand you attended the Oxford Locality meeting in July when the majority of councillors agreed that a strategic approach to allocating funds in the City would be taken where possible, and applications would be considered at the September Oxford Locality meeting. This was to ensure there was sufficient time for successful applicants to spend the money before March 2018. I also understand this approach was publicised on the Council's website, that interested community groups were notified and councillors were

provided with a suggested statement to use when communicating with groups in their division. I am pleased to learn that the full £50,000 of funding has since been allocated to community groups in the City following your September Locality meeting. I appreciate some confusion may have been caused with a later deadline date published on the generic application form, however it has always been the intention to be clear to organisations intending to bid that they should be aware of the local variation.

Successful applicants are expected to comply with any monitoring request, which will include receipts detailing how money has been spent, reports and evidence of project activities, and feedback from people impacted by the project. All projects are subject to review and successful applicants are encouraged to keep the Policy Team informed of their project's progress and any setbacks incurred. Monitoring will be undertaken by the Accountable Officer Sarah Jelley post March 2018 and include a financial return from the organisations. A monitoring report will be made available for Councillors. As with any grant the County Council awards, Councillors can be assured that any unspent monies will be recovered by the County Council."