

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 SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>The County Council claims to wish to encourage cycling, as one of the best ways of reducing pollution and congestion and improving health. Why is it then that we have discontinued the popular scheme in which staff could once a year get their bikes repaired and serviced at their work-places?"</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The decision to remove this service was taken as part of last year's budget round and following a decision by the provider that they no longer wanted to provide it. Having looked into the matter, the re-provision of the service would cost in the order of £12,000 and I do not believe this would be best use of our limited resources.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Were staff consulted about this change and if not why not and if so what is the feedback and are fewer staff now cycling?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Councillor Pressel will be aware that this was carried out about 18 months ago and that it went through last years' budget cycle. So I don't have a direct answer to that at the moment, I will get one for her outside of the meeting.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>On 19 November the Head of the National Audit Office said that the DCLG 'really needs to be better informed about the situation on the ground among local authorities across England...' in order to head off serious problems before they happen'. Please can the Leader tell Council what steps he has taken better to inform ministers about our dire</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>Thank you for the question. I can confirm that I have written to the Prime Minister twice on behalf of the council explaining our funding position. Also I meet him regularly and take every opportunity to explain the situation. I've had several meetings with Ministers from DCLG and again I explain our financial situation. You may have noticed that I signed an open letter along with other Leaders of Councils that was published in the Observer highlighting our financial position.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>financial situation and has he made it clear to them that some of the cuts we are now being forced to make are false economies, because they will cause expensive problems further down the line and put people's lives at risk?"</p>	<p>It has been an impressive task to make savings of £170 million since 2010 and this year we are looking to save another £31 million with more savings of £84 million to be made prior to 2018. I would like to thank the staff for their hard work and cooperation during this difficult period, so far this has been achieved overwhelmingly through efficiency, although as the savings target increases a greater proportion has involved, and will involve, some really tough decisions.</p> <p>We have to ask the question as to why we have to have the programme of austerity and having to make these very difficult decisions. I fully support the Conservative led coalition's ambition to reduce the deficit as we all should know that we cannot borrow more and more.</p> <p>The reason for the structural deficit started back in 2001; this was a period of economic growth for the country. During such a period a prudent chancellor and his assistants would use any surplus to reduce the national debt and save money for economically bad times. Unfortunately the chancellor at that time was not prudent and went on a spending spree actually increasing the structural deficit rather than reducing it as can be seen from the graph below. You will notice that despite the economic boom tax receipts remained relatively static but with a massive increase in spending we had to borrow more to pay for the spending spree.</p>

Questions

Answers



This reckless period of spending meant that when the crash happened in 2008 there was no money in the bank to help the country through the economic downturn so we had to start borrowing yet more money. This embedded structural deficit has added to our current situation. It has taken a strong chancellor to reduce the deficit by 1/3 with more work to be done to bring expenditure in line with income. Whoever is Chancellor after the General Election, he or she will have to continue to reduce the expenditure to come in line with income; surely a target for any prudent chancellor?

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>When will the Leader of the Council start to admit that the economy was doing well at the time of the last election and this collision government has been abysmal with borrow - far higher – when will he admit that borrow is now far higher than the average borrow under Labour, with all the promises on the deficit broken and here is a chart to prove it.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The first question “would I acknowledge it was a period of economic boom” I think if Councillor Pressel reads my answer I am acknowledging there was a period of economic growth in 2001 – 2008. If you look at the graph that is when the country should have been putting money in to the back to save for a rainy day. Unfortunately, as you can see, is what happened during that period was there was massive expenditure and structural deficit occurred and that meant when the crash occurred there was no money in the bank. I can't remember who actually said that but I think it was an out-going Labour minister.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Would the Cabinet member agree that the various targets set for reducing delayed transfers of care in Oxfordshire are disappointingly unambitious, and in view of this would she agree that it's particularly shocking that ALL these targets have been missed, some by a very long way? If she doesn't agree, please could she tell us why?”</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JUDITH HEATHCOAT, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE</p> <p>The targets set to reduce the number of days people are delayed in hospital by 37.5% from a baseline measured from April 2012 to June 2013. This is an ambitious target.</p> <p>So far this year (April - September) delays have dropped by 15%, which whilst not at target shows some improvement. Within this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NHS delays have dropped by 8% b. Social care delays have dropped by 33% c. Both delays (principally due to patients waiting for reablement provided by Oxford Health) have risen by 8% <p>At the same time nationally delays have increased by 12%. Within this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. NHS delays have risen by 15% e. Social care delays have risen by 4% f. Both delays have risen by 16% <p>I hope that Councillor Pressel will congratulate the staff in Adult Social Care who have worked so hard to reduce delays that are within our control. We</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>are committed to bringing down those delays still further. It is important to recognise that adult social care delays make up a relatively small proportion of delays (28 % so far this year). However, progress with the overall number of delays is down to health service colleagues at Oxford University Hospitals Trust and at Oxford Health. Most delays are within their control. I presume that Councillor Pressel is making even more strident representations to those organisations.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>In view of these sad and shocking figures, did the Cabinet Member also find herself remembering that sad and shocking poem about low targets missed – it goes like this “out of work, divorced, usually pi**ed he aimed low in life, and missed”.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>In March 2014 Councillor Pressel said at Bodicote Council meeting that we were the worst local authority in the Country for DETOCK, in September 2014 at Council here Councillor Pressel again said that we were the worst County. At Bodicote and again in September, I explained that the data collecting and reported on across the Country is not comparable. Today Councillor Pressel states that targets for reducing DETOCK are unambitious. If Councillor Pressel considers us to be the worst local authority how does she believe that using more ambitious targets would help the situation. Today I have advised that Adult Social Care delays have dropped by 33%. We have reduced delays that are within our direct control and we are meeting targets to reduce delays. At the October meeting of Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (of which Councillor Pressel is a member of) she was updated on DETOCK and I will repeat again the information received by members at that Committee. Care needs to be taken in interpreting this information as it is clear that different parts of the Country co-delays differently and in many places delays are under reported. Delays are reported on people in hospital beds, in Oxfordshire we have a significant number of community hospital beds. In many others areas of the Country these services are provided in care homes which are excluded from the figures. At last weeks’ Older Peoples Joint Management Group (an open meeting that Councillor Pressel could have attended) there was a report on performance. Adult Social Care is reducing the number of DETOCK. However, the number of days patients are delayed each month due to the NHS is some 53% over target – I repeat</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>DETOCK is a multi-agency problem not all targets have been missed, thanks to much work that is being done here. But Health Patient Choice Equity and Fair Access Policy is not helping as the ethos for the patient in this document states "When I'm ready to leave hospital". This means that some beds are not vacated when acute treatment is finished for 10 days and more. We are encouraging Health to be more proactive in undertaking difficult conversations with patients that our Adult Social Workers do on a daily basis. Choice is a barrier to discharge if appropriate options have been refused. Health will now, thank goodness, employ formal stages for discharge. Can I tell everybody here that DETOCKs were 35 for adult social care and can I tell her that there will be figures published today that will show that the DETOCK for adult social care is down to 28. So I say thank you to Adult Social Services staff who are doing all they can to reduce DETOCK from Adult Social Care point of view.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>Can you outline the current plans and timetable to ensure the chronic traffic jams between Wolvercote and Witney on the A40 are overcome?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The recently published A40 Baseline Statement shows that the congestion and queuing on A40 between Oxford and Witney is a combination of insufficient capacity at the junctions on the route, principally in North Oxford but also at Cassington and Eynsham, and also of insufficient road capacity to meet peak demand on the A40 route itself. To resolve the problems it will be necessary to reduce or remove both of these problems; this can be done either through measures to increase the capacity of the route or measures to reduce the demands placed on the road, or a combination of the two.</p> <p>The capacity at Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts is being dealt with by improvements funded through a combination of Local Transport Board and City Deal funding. These are now at an advanced stage of design and work on implementing them is due to start in June 2015, subject to consultation, with completion by February 2016. A strategic link road between A40 and A44 west of the A34 viaduct is also in the planning stages; this would further</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>reduce demand on Wolvercote Roundabout and thereby improve flows. Funding has yet to be fully secured for this but a target date of 2018 has been set for start of construction.</p> <p>Increasing the numbers who use public transport, particularly to destinations away from central Oxford such as Headington and Cowley, would significantly reduce demand on the A40. A sum of £35 million has been provisionally secured through the Local Growth Fund to “expand the integrated public transport along the knowledge spine (by) delivering major enhancements to the A40 strategic route”. A project to identify the most appropriate scheme to do this is currently underway and will be subject to public consultation in Summer 2015. The target for start of delivery for this scheme is 2017/18.</p> <p>Alongside this a study has been started to identify a long-term strategy for the A40. This will consider a wide range of possible schemes including additional traffic lanes, full dualling, reopening the Oxford-Witney railway, light rail (tram) and/or extensive bus priority. Our aim is to have identified a long term strategy by Autumn 2015 which will then allow a funding and implementation strategy to be developed. It is probable that the overall strategy, whichever option is chosen, would be implemented in stages over the next 15-20 years.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Could I strongly encourage you to improve flow on the A40 at the earliest opportunity, because however much economic growth Oxfordshire does, the A40 will otherwise remain an overriding restriction and negate that growth.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The answer is yes and there are studies going on as we speak.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>5. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>You will be aware of OCC's responsibilities for the Grade I ancient bridge at Newbridge over the Thames, built by eleven monks on the order of King John. Can you confirm that OCC will be replacing the camera, which supervised the restriction of HGVs crossing the bridge to those capable of carrying less than 18.5 tonnes and has been ineffective for some two years? If you will not be replacing the camera, how are OCC going to ensure that all those illegal HGVs presently crossing the bridge to its structural detriment are prevented from breaking the Law?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>First of all I would like to thank the quality of the construction by the 11 monks, who built a bridge which has survived 800 years and has been subjected to a usage they could not have imagined in their wildest dreams.</p> <p>We have reviewed the situation and now have a preferred option to replace the current enforcement system however we do not currently have funding to implement it.</p> <p>While we are investigating the funding opportunities we will continue with the normal method of relying on Trading Standards and the police to manually enforce the weight limit here, as we do for all other similar structural weight limit locations.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you for the answer, as this problem has been in existence for the last 15 months, could you give me a timetable for repairs to the camera or other plans to ensure that the bridge is protected.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>If you don't mind, and we have discussed this privately I will do that outside the meeting as I don't have timescales at the moment, there are studies going on and reviews going on which you are well aware of and I will keep you updated as best I can.</p>
<p>6. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>In view of the annual decline of government funding for this Council and the restriction on expanding income from the public purse, can the Cabinet Member outline how he is encouraging Income Generation and ensuring the future viability of the County Council and</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LAWRIE STRATFORD, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>The Council seeks to maximise income generation where it is cost effective to do so. The corporate charging policy is reviewed annually and was agreed by Cabinet in September 2014</p> <p>All services must consider, as part of the annual service and resource planning process, all the activities which make up the delivery of that service,</p>

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its commitments?	<p>and assess which of them may be made the subject of a charge.</p> <p>In setting the 2014/15 budget and medium term financial plan, a number of new income generation measures were agreed. These included;</p> <p>Making the Music Service self-financing by increasing income opportunities Income from a new specialist training service in Trading Standards Development of a commercial training unit in the Fire & Rescue Service In Environment & Economy, income generated through sponsorship and providing other services.</p> <p>Additional activity in Registration service generating further income</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Cabinet Member, I'm afraid your reply leaves me cold, but that won't surprise you, do you really believe that this is a realistic approach?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>When I first took this position up in September, I agreed that the CAG – Income Generated Working Group would be suspended. I wanted Officers to focus on getting the budget sorted in this most challenging time. That they have done.</p> <p>But I can perhaps give Councillor Mathew something that might warm him up a little bit, that I am intending that CAG be reopened probably towards the end of January when I will invite other members to participate.</p>
<p>7. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Has the Portfolio holder noted the moves by the Tyne and Wear local authority known as the Quality Contract Scheme where they have set out moves to bring the bus services back under local authority control. Does he accept that whilst under local government</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>I note that there are moves to introduce a Quality Contract Scheme for bus services in the Tyne and Wear metropolitan area although the process has not yet been concluded. I understand that Quality Contracts were designed for implementation in areas where bus services are perceived to be failing with high fares, no evening or Sunday services and old buses. This cannot be said to describe the scene in Oxfordshire where we have a large number of</p>

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<p>buses services invariably made a profit and that the present funding arrangements with the legal obligations of concessionary fares and subsidised routes falling on local authorities whilst bus companies make large profits is no longer viable?</p>	<p>new low emission buses and where the last bus to Wantage on a Saturday night is 3am.</p> <p>Oxfordshire has been noted for its large number of commercial bus services, which do not need any Council subsidy and for the high level of bus usage by its residents. In recent years some subsidised bus services have been taken over by operators on a commercial basis with a consequent saving for the public purse and we are grateful for this. The requirement to reimburse bus companies for the carriage of concessionary pass holders is a statutory one for which we receive money directly from the Government.</p> <p>The County Council will continue to work in partnership with the bus operators to create the right conditions for commercial bus services to thrive.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>The move by Tyne and Wear to bring back public transport which is owned and operated and managed by the Local Authority, will take perhaps a year to be implemented as he says in his response. Would he give a commitment that when the year is over (2015) he will go back and will look at what has actually happened in that County Council and come back to the Council with a report?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>It is not actually in our plan to take buses back into local authority control. We have a number of providers across the County all providing commercial services and subsidised services and I don't envisage us changing the basic stance on that.</p>
<p>8. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Would the portfolio holder admit that the present road works around the City of Oxford are causing severe delays and massive</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The County Council is delivering transport improvements in an around the city of Oxford on a scale we have not encountered before. Tackling the problems of an antiquated and failing transport system, as we are doing at the moment</p>

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<p>congestion on a scale we have not encountered before? Could he accept that launching roundabout remodelling scheme and other major road works all at the same time is not a good idea and that some form of scheduling may have been more appropriate?</p>	<p>to meet both current and future demand, is only possible due to the persistence and commitment of the county council in seeking funding from the Government.</p> <p>Delivering such massive improvements in the timescales required not just by the funding, but also the impending start of major non-council schemes such as the Westgate, Oxford Rail Station and associated rail network improvements, Northern Gateway, the Barton housing development and West Way, means that we have to schedule our work very carefully. We are also working closely with utility companies to ensure that our works are coordinated as far as practicable with the similar need for the utilities to improve their infrastructure to meet projected demand. If we do not do the work now then the road network will not be able to cope with traffic during the undertaking of those other works or the additional traffic they will attract once completed. As a result Oxford will lose the money and face a future of congestion and delays.</p> <p>We know that bringing this level of investment to Oxford to overhaul and improve the city's infrastructure will bring significant disruption. However to reduce the impact on the road network as a result of this much needed investment, the council has sought to ensure the maximum amount of work can be undertaken during traffic management arrangements, meaning that much of the work is being done with roads kept open and passable and using off peak closures to ensure that the city remains accessible throughout.</p> <p>Much of the most severe congestion has occurred at the start of work and we have seen significant improvements to journey times after a few weeks as people look at different ways of travelling by either choosing a different mode of transport or the times at which they are travelling. The council has therefore sought to be very proactive in their messaging of when these key impacts are likely to occur to encourage people to be similarly proactive in</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>their travel choices.</p> <p>The work we are doing now is a priority not just for the county council, but also for the Local Enterprise Partnership who see investment in transport as being key to the future success of Oxford and Oxfordshire. Without the work we are doing now to improve traffic flows the city would potentially face permanent delays of the kind you are temporarily seeing at the moment during the work as traffic levels rise to further exceed the road capacity.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Given that the Government restrictions on when the money must be spent is a problem as is recognised, has he considered making representations to the Government to make those arrangements more flexible so that the County can arrange the works in the way that is most efficient for us.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We have, we have made it to the highest level and because a number of Oxfordshire MPs around here you will know who the highest level is. We are doing our best to work with the parameters given to us by the Government to spend the money. We are not in the position to turn down the money. We are just trying to work out how to deal with the money that is coming our way, because we are looking for the long term benefit of the County.</p>
<p>9. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>The recent train down the new (some say old) Cowley rail line is extremely welcome but how long will it take for the service to become truly operational. What moves are being made to recreate the stations and infrastructure that will be essential to its full operation and what time line is envisaged?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>It is difficult to say at the moment when this proposal would become operational – this depends on a number of factors, including being able to demonstrate a business case for investment and the availability of funding for new rail projects, which is a national consideration. As the rail industry works in 5 year funding ‘control’ periods, the earliest this is likely to come on stream is during the next (2019-2024) period, as the funding for the current period (which began this year) is already committed.</p> <p>On the business case side, our colleagues at Chiltern Railways have been undertaking further work in looking at the viability of operating passenger services on Oxford’s Cowley Line, and are due to be sharing their findings later this month. The outcome of this work will help us decide what happens</p>

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	next, and we will continue to work closely with Chiltern to move this important scheme forward.
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Is there any government money which will actually help this process especially for example in establishing new railway holts and refurbishing some of the stations which were on this particular stretch of line?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The money available comes through Network Rail and the Department of Transport and they are now working up their plans for control period 6 which begins in March 2019 and that is where money will come from.</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>It is good news that the First Foot Forward Hostel will be de-commissioned at the end of march 2015. However could the Cabinet member confirm that a new progressive policy of separating perpetrators and victims will be implemented as this change takes place with these vulnerable young adults housed in smaller more supportive units?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>The new services are founded on an approach to managing the needs, risks and vulnerabilities of young people which is robust, timely and undertaken within a multi-agency framework. This approach will prioritise safeguarding to ensure relationships are managed safely and constructively within a complex dynamic where young people might be both perpetrator in one situation and victim in another or indeed where they might be both simultaneously. The new arrangement of smaller units will provide greater flexibility to respond to incidents and manage household dynamics positively and safely for all concerned.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Will this commitment that we go to smaller units, which are bespoke to people's needs become a reality; will some resources be placed at those localities to make and support</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Yes.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>the services for these vulnerable young people.</p>	
<p>11. COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE</p> <p>Given the significant concerns of the five local County Councillors regarding the proposed re-alignment of Howes Lane, Bicester would the Cabinet Member actively support their view that all options need to be kept open in respect of decisions on the status of this vital link/perimeter road?</p> <p>I am sure the Member is more than aware that multiple developers are bringing forward their own schemes which will need a joined-up solution that will meet the needs of all Bicester and not just the interests of an individual developer’.</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Yes, officers have recently spoken to and will continue to talk to the Bicester members about keeping current options open and exploring the future options about taking strategic traffic around the northwest of Bicester. However, in light of the 4 recent planning applications that have been submitted, the council will need to decide its formal position in response to those applications.</p> <p>OCC agrees with the member’s concerns regarding the multiple developer and multiple planning application approach. It is unclear the way this site is currently being brought forward how those applications can ensure that the necessary infrastructure (for example the secondary school and strategic transport infrastructure) will be provided. OCC is discussing our concerns with this approach with the district council (as local planning authority).</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Given the strategic road application for the realignment of Howes Lane by the developer, will the member work with Cherwell District Council officers to ensure this application is taken first ensuring that horse comes before the cart as far as eco-development in Bicester is concerned.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We will work with anybody to make sure that what actually is provided at the end of the day meets with the requirements of Bicester and meets with the requirements of the residents and local members. So the answer is yes.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>12. COUNCILLOR NICK HARDS</p> <p>Following the recent resignation of the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership Network and the disclosure by the chairman Alex Pratt that the Network is seriously under resourced, please would the Leader confirm that Oxfordshire’s Local Enterprise Partnership is still on course to deliver the enormous economic growth which is planned for Oxfordshire including all of the infrastructure which is needed to enable that growth to happen?”</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I can assure Cllr Hards that the Oxfordshire LEP is functioning well as this council provides the main resource for it to be able to plan and bid for funds to deliver economic growth to Oxfordshire. The resourcing of the LEP Network is a completely separate issue from individual LEPs themselves. The LEP does not actually deliver the infrastructure as the majority is for Highways and we deliver the works as the Highway authority.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Since the Council provides the main resource for the Oxfordshire LEP and the Network is under resourced, what insurance can we as members have that no costs are falling on this Council’s revenue budget which should more properly be borne by the LEP, either Oxfordshire’s or the Network.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We are providing the main resource for the Local Enterprise Partnership which could be a contentious issue; however you have got to remember we will be delivering the work. It has to be part of the Local Transport Plan anyway and actually if you think about it working with the LEP we have obtained £106m worth of funding for the road network and £56m of other funding, so I think is it good value for money and working with the LEP to make sure that they identify the correct projects.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR JANET GODDEN</p> <p>Residents of my division have been disturbed to read press reports of a feasibility scheme for the widening of the A34 along the stretch from Hinksey Hill to Pear Tree. This would entail the demolition of houses along both sides of the A34 where it runs through North Hinksey / Botley. Residents of the roads</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>Thank you for your question. I’m sure you are aware that the traffic congestion on the A34 is not just a national problem or even an Oxfordshire problem as it’s a local problem for your division. The road is currently at or near capacity and any incident on it causes delays and disruption to local roads as motorists try to seek alternative routes, this directly affects your residents. It’s not just residents that are affected but local businesses too. I sure that you would agree with me that a solution to the A34 needs to be</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>directly affected fear planning blight. How far has this thinking progressed and what is this Council's involvement? What sort of timescale is envisaged?</p>	<p>found.</p> <p>The Highways Agency has produced Route-Based Strategy (RBS) for the A34. As a result of this baseline report, OCC commissioned Atkins to take forward a number of transport measures, which were identified within the Baseline Statement as potential mitigation for the growth in traffic over the next 15years. The measures were a combination of traffic control, capacity enhancements and demand management. The report undertook a high-level review of the twelve measures using the application of engineering judgement to assess the potential impact of the measures. This report was presented to the Shadow Growth Board on 20th November for consideration. This has meant we have received additional funds of £1.5 million to progress the scheme to the next stage.</p> <p>One option that members of the public frequently put forward is making the A34 a 3 lane motorway with a hard shoulder throughout Oxfordshire, whilst this may be possible in some areas in the Botley area it would involve considerable disruption however if this option is not investigated it could cause a problem at a later date as there could be a challenge that may delay or prevent a solution being delivered. All options have to be considered to identify the best possible option. The A34 RBS work identifies this as a possible long term solution (5-15 years).</p> <p>I can understand the concern this may cause to local residents however I am sure that they would agree that a solution to the A34 needs to be found and to do nothing as has been the case in the past is not an option.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>At the last Council on 4th November, under the Report of Cabinet, I asked why, when the County Council is reducing staff numbers, it is spending £1 million a quarter on agency staff.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>It is normal practice for organisations in both the private and public sector to use agency staff in the normal management of service delivery. Councils across the country do this. There is nothing unique about Oxfordshire in this regard. Entirely logically - and like all major employers - we use temporary</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>The Deputy Leader was unable to answer. Could the Deputy Leader now answer the question?</p>	<p>staff to cover key vacancies where a post holder has left for a new job and the permanent replacement is not due to arrive until sometime later. We also use temporary staff to manage increased workload in specific areas or to cover sickness and maternity leave. Criticism of the use of agency staff by any organisation contains a built in assumption that somehow agency staff are of a lesser standard. Agency staff can quite often bring real expertise at important times – something that all public and private sector organisations know. Total spend on agency staff for 2013/14 represented approximately 3.3 per cent of the council’s overall salary budget – so a very small proportion. 2014/15 will not be dissimilar and we anticipate seeing a further reduction in agency costs as the recruitment freeze announced last week takes effect.</p>
<p>15. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>On 4th November Cllr Nimmo Smith promised Council that the road works, that are causing so much disruption on Oxford’s southern by-pass, would be completed by the end of November. At Cabinet on 25th November he said the works would not be complete until the end of December. When will the works now be completed?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The contraflow is being removed on 7 December. Works are planned to be completed by 19 December.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member accept my hearty congratulations that the target of the 7 December was actually met and does this mean that in future the many road schemes that the County is embarking on across and around Oxfordshire will keep to time?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Thank you very much Councillor Tanner and I hope that you realise that actually some of the projects we have done in Oxfordshire have actually been ahead of time. We were constrained on this particular one by the weather because you can’t really do waterproofing when it is raining.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>16. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>The County Council, I'm pleased to say, has installed LED street lights in part of my Isis division recently. Could the Cabinet member say whether this LED street light renewal covers the whole of Oxfordshire, how much it is costing and how much money and carbon footprint it is expected to save?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>I can confirm that Oxfordshire County Council is currently trialling LED street lighting as a direct replacement when the existing equipment comes to the end of their serviceable life.</p> <p>The locations that have currently been converted are in Banbury, Didcot, Eynsham and Oxford in a small sample area. The number of units that have been replaced over the last 3 years is 1250 units at a cost of £369K, with a saving of 125 metric tons of carbon per year. The energy consumed by those units has also been reduced by 78%.</p> <p>The County Council has over 59,000 street lights and is reviewing the durability and success of our trial sites to inform future replacement programmes and specifications. I can also confirm that all new housing developments that are to be adopted by Oxfordshire County Council are specified with an LED/dimming solution.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member keep members informed of the progress of these experiments and let us know when these LED lights are going to be applied right across the County?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Well if I can answer in reverse order. It is going to cost a fortune to actually do all the lights, it is going to have to be done on a phased programme as and when money becomes available, but I will endeavour to make sure that all Councillors are updated with the progress as it develops.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>17. COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS</p> <p>As of 1st December 2014 what percentage of secondary schools and primary schools have a full-time school nurse and what account was taken of the size of school and deprivation indices when allocating school nurses.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR HILARY HIBBERT-BILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR</p> <p>We have a complement of 34 school health nurses, and all are in post or have been appointed barring the normal staff turnover found in any workforce. Current turnover has left 1 vacancy, which is being appointed to in the normal way and we are confident this will soon be filled. The number of school nursing positions in secondary schools in Oxfordshire has increased from 19, prior to April 2014, to 34 from 1st April 2014 an increase of 73% since the County Council took over the service in April 2013. Primary schools also have a school nurse team, consisting of 8 whole time equivalent positions.</p> <p>Our priority was to have a School Health Nurse (SHN) who would become a well-known individual to the secondary school and the local community and this was strongly supported by head teachers. As we wanted a term time presence in each secondary school across the county, that meant 1 nurse per school. We believe that this will significantly strengthen the School Health Nurse role in all schools as nurses put together plans for health improvement with school heads and the Council.</p> <p>The service continues to provide an additional service in areas of high social deprivation around the County 6 nurses are employed all year round in these areas as we believe this constant support is of particular benefit. The service also now has a full time nurse covering the Pupil Referral Unit which deals with some of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children.</p> <p>The service commissioned by the County Council is supplemented by a School Health Nurse immunisation service commissioned by the NHS.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you for your comprehensive reply about the secondary school provision for</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>8 are more than there were previously when we took over. I obviously would love to put more in primary schools and I acknowledge what you say and I</p>

Questions	Answers
school health nurses. However given that learned behaviour, good and bad starts at a young age, how satisfied are you about primary school provision given that there are 8 whole time equivalent positions for the 100's of primary schools in Oxfordshire?	agree with it. However, we have had a problem even getting up to 34 nurses for all our secondary schools because originally those trained nurses were run down by the NHS, so we have actually had to take time to get them up to scratch and get them in all the secondary schools. I agree it would be good to have more than we have put into the primary schools.