

**QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>1. COUNCILLOR BOB JOHNSTON</b></p> <p>In the light of the rising concern about road produced air pollution in general and diesel generated oxides of nitrogen in particular, will she agree to convene an early meeting of the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Cabinet Advisory Group to seek to upgrade LTP4 accordingly in its next iteration?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>I share the growing concern about air pollution. We updated LTP4 last year to strengthen our position on air quality in accordance with a motion passed by members. We have just responded to the latest Government consultation on this subject, stressing the importance of walking and cycling in achieving a cleaner environment, and seeking clarification of the Government’s position on Clean Air Zones. In Oxford, we are awaiting a report from consultants on the recently completed Zero Emission Zone study (commissioned in partnership with the city council) focusing on central Oxford.</p> <p>The LTP Members Working Group, which I was part of, performed a very useful role and in principle I would be happy to revive this. It was originally set up as a sub-group of the Transport Advisory Panel but the Panel proved less useful and ceased to meet, while the LTP Members Working Group carried on with its work. In reviving this we need to consider and get the Council to agree issues of membership and governance and its exact remit.</p> <p>This is something we will look at in relation to the timing of the next LTP update - whilst primarily for us to decide, this will be influenced by other factors including the National Infrastructure Commission final report in the Oxford to Cambridge corridor due in the autumn, but I hope we can agree something. This update work will need to cover a number of issues, including an early examination of air quality. For this to be most useful, we should await the Government’s response to the recent consultation and the report of the Zero Emission Zone study, both due by the end of July.</p>

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<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Could we anticipate a meeting of the LTP4 Working Advisory Group say in early Autumn?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>I have checked this out with the officers and I think there is every expectation that we will revive the LTP4 Working Group. I can't promise you when it will happen. At the moment the officers are suggesting that we should wait for the reports to come in so that there is work to comment on.</p>
<p><b>2. COUNCILLOR BOB JOHNSTON</b></p> <p>On the 13th of December 2016, I moved a motion calling on the Railway Minister to reverse his shelving of the Didcot to Oxford electrification. This was passed nem con, what action(s) has been taken to follow up this motion?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Network Rail is midway through an ambitious £38 billion five-year investment programme up to 2019, funded by the UK Government, which includes electrification of the Great Western Mainline as part of a major route upgrade. With the cost of electrification having tripled in cost to an estimated £2.8 billion, the Secretary of State asked Sir Peter Hendy, the chairman of Network Rail to review of their Enhancement Delivery Plan to see what could be delivered in an affordable way and more efficiently with a better understanding of cost and the delivery challenges, and within the funding available from the Treasury in the current funding period until March 2019.</p> <p>The Hendy Report was published in November 2015 and concluded that replanning of some works would enable them to be delivered faster and with better value-for-money. The report confirmed that electrification will still go ahead, albeit some route sections will be delivered to a different timescale than originally planned, including the line between Didcot Parkway and Oxford which was to be delivered by June 2019 rather than in 2016.</p> <p>In a written statement to Parliament on 8 November 2016, Transport Minister Paul Maynard MP announced that electrification between Didcot Parkway and Oxford would be deferred; no completion date has been given. In addition, electrification has been removed from the scope of East West Rail meaning the railway between Oxford and Milton Keynes will remain a diesel-operated route for</p>

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	<p>the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Whilst we are disappointed that the planned investment has been deferred, many of the benefits of electrification will be delivered in other ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="887 405 2018 730">1. The order for new Class 800/801 InterCity Express Trains has been changed so all trains will be bi-mode electro-diesel (rather than a mix of bi-mode and fully electric as originally proposed). It is worth noting that many of the Oxford-London 'fast' services will have used bi-mode trains anyway as they continue beyond Oxford to Worcester on the North Cotswolds Line which is not electrified; the changeover from electric to diesel will occur whilst the trains are on the move near Didcot rather than at Oxford. The only downside is that a bi-mode train when used in diesel mode is noisier and emits more pollution than a fully-electric train as they are heavier.</li><li data-bbox="887 775 2018 879">2. In addition, Great Western Railway has invested £490 million in an additional fleet of new Class 802 trains to bolster the number of bi-mode trains, and some of these will be used on 'fast' services to Oxford.</li><li data-bbox="887 924 2018 1214">3. From January 2018, new Class 387 electric trains will begin operating Outer Thames Valley services from Didcot to Reading/London. To enable that to happen the existing 'stopping' service from Oxford to Reading will be replaced with a diesel shuttle service between Oxford and Didcot Parkway calling at Radley, Culham and Appleford stations, and this will connect with the new electric trains. Most passengers from these stations already change trains at Didcot onto fast trains to Reading and London so there will be minimal inconvenience.</li></ol> <p>Oxfordshire will not have to make do with existing trains as the new electric rolling stock is not being put into store. The vast majority of people travelling from Oxford and Didcot will still benefit from new state-of-the-art trains, using electric power for most of their journey. The trains will be powered by diesel engines complying with the latest European Stage IIIB emissions regulations for</p>

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	<p>non-road machinery, making them more environmentally friendly compared to the trains they are replacing.</p> <p>Electrification itself will not have delivered the step-change in rail services that we think are needed to support a growing economy, and will not have provided the extra connectivity for residents and businesses.</p> <p>Since electrification was confirmed in 2010, it has become obvious that a lack of capacity to operate more trains will become a major constraint in less than five years. This now has to be the top priority for rail investment in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The railway south of Oxford is already operating over 90% of its capacity and without extra infrastructure it will not be possible to increase the number of trains beyond those expected to be running in 2019, regardless of whether they are diesel or electric-powered trains.</p> <p>Deferring electrification is therefore an opportunity to develop this nationally important rail corridor through the Knowledge Spine so it has better capability and more capacity to deal with the demand as Oxfordshire's, and the United Kingdom, economy and population grows.</p> <p>Without extra track and station capacity between Oxford and Didcot, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the following key rail objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East West Rail Phase 2 services being extended from Oxford to Didcot and Reading;</li> <li>• New services to Cowley, with stations at Oxford Science Park and Oxford Business Park having potential to facilitate sustainable new housing at Grenoble Road;</li> <li>• Direct services from Oxford/Didcot to Heathrow Airport once the new rail link into the airport opens in 2024;</li> <li>• A half-hourly service from Oxford (and beyond, via East West Rail) to Swindon, Bath and Bristol;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased service frequency between centres of growth in the Knowledge Spine, for example at Didcot, Culham and Oxford, with more trains calling at Culham linked to new housing and employment around the station;</li> <li>• New rail links within Oxfordshire, for example by extending the diesel shuttle service beyond Oxford to Hanborough, and improving services to Banbury.</li> </ul> <p>It is not in our best interest to seek a review of the government’s decision. We cannot wait for decades before the railway catches up with our growth agenda; expanding the existing railway will be less complicated and less expensive without electrification.</p> <p>When electrification does take place, it should be of an upgraded, higher capacity railway. In the meantime we will strive for a better deal for Oxfordshire by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with Great Western Railway to understand how the passenger benefits of electrification, such as more seats and faster journeys, are going to be secured;</li> <li>2. Working with Network Rail to identify and bring-forward enhancements that deliver extra track and station capacity and, where necessary, seek to safeguard the land required in the relevant Local Plan;</li> <li>3. Work with OxLEP, the Growth Board and other partners to lobby the Department for Transport to commit funding that will allow Network Rail to start development work on enhancements to be delivered before 2024, in the same way that £27 million has been committed to further develop the Oxford-Cambridge expressway;</li> <li>4. Seeking to better align investment in strategic transport infrastructure, including rail, with the location of strategic development sites to maximise their viability and value for money;</li> </ol>

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	5. Submitting proposals to the Department for Transport setting out our ambitions for the next Great Western franchise, due to commence in April 2020.
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Does what the Cabinet Member has set out in the answer mean that for the indefinite future that the shuttle service from Oxford to Didcot will continue to use the aging, highly polluting and very noisy class 165 and 166 turbo diesels and does it also mean that people commuting from Cholsey having arrived in a very swish 387 will now be forced to change onto the same said polluting diesels at Didcot in order to continue their journey to Oxford.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>The answer stands as reported here. The old lines will not have the new electric trains. As expected the pressure to do that continues and Oxfordshire County will be continuing to do that. There will be work on the new franchise for GWR that may affect those lines and we will keep you updated with all developments.</p>
<p><b>3. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</b></p> <p>What steps is the county council taking to ensure that the small primary schools across the County forced to pay the Apprenticeship Levy will be able to see a return on their investment in skills development?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR HIBBERT-BILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH &amp; EDUCATION</b></p> <p>The Apprenticeship Levy came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017, and the council is keen to ensure we get maximum return on investment from the Levy across all our services and schools. The council is supporting those schools that are liable for the Levy where the local authority is the employer. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community schools</li> <li>• Voluntary Controlled schools</li> <li>• Foundation or Voluntary Aided schools which have an annual payroll bill of more than £3m</li> </ul> <p>The Council's pot of Levy funding includes c.£640,000 for schools where the local authority is the employer. This money can only be used to pay for formal apprenticeship training, and takes the form of digital vouchers provided by the</p>

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	<p>Education and Skills Funding Agency in an online account.</p> <p>The County Council's HR service has been engaging schools in planning for the Levy since clear guidance from central government was published in 2016. Information and support has been provided in a diverse range of ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting information and answering queries at meetings with School Business Managers</li> <li>• Individual advice and guidance provided via face to face visits to schools, over the phone and email</li> <li>• Updates regarding the practical process to source relevant training options via Schools News</li> <li>• Providing information to Heads and Chairs briefings</li> </ul> <p>Schools can access digital Levy vouchers via the council's HR service. We will help to identify a good quality training provider, and provide guidance on apprentice recruitment for new entrants. We will also support the school to ensure they comply with all regulations around training an apprentice, for example allowing sufficient time for off-the-job training, and completing a health and safety risk assessment for a young person where applicable.</p> <p>There are a wide range of Apprenticeship training options that can be funded by the Levy either for entry-level roles or as career development for existing staff in schools. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Supporting teaching and learning in schools</li> <li>❖ Early years educator</li> <li>❖ Business Administration</li> <li>❖ IT technician</li> <li>❖ Caretaker/property maintenance</li> <li>❖ PE teaching</li> <li>❖ Catering</li> <li>❖ Cleaning and support services</li> </ul> <p>The range of qualifications available is increasing all the time, so for example a</p>

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	teaching apprenticeship for graduate entry is in development, and due to be available in September 2018. There is no age restriction applied to apprenticeship training. Candidates may be eligible for funding even if they have existing or higher level qualifications. Some time off normal work duties will be required. All qualifications take at least one year to complete, longer if staff are employed on a term-time only basis.
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Many small schools will receive only tiny amounts of money. Is there any way in which a group of schools can pool funds through the County arrangements and if so would the Cabinet Member investigate whether such pooled funds could be used in the developments that are taking place to produce an apprenticeship at the graduate level for initial teacher training which might help to bolster the number of teachers trained in Oxfordshire as we know we have a recruitment and also a retention issue in that area.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>Yes I will look into that and it is something that possibly could be done, but I will check on that.</p>
<p><b>4. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</b></p> <p>What is the current outcome for Ofsted judgments on secondary schools funded by the State in Oxfordshire and how does it compare with our statistical neighbours?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR HIBBERT-BILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH &amp; EDUCATION</b></p> <p>The vast majority of our secondary schools are now academies, with only three secondary schools currently in local authority control. We expect to only have one maintained secondary school by the end of this financial year. Our responsibility for school improvement of secondary schools is very much diminished for this reason. However we have developed a strong school to school support model in Oxfordshire, working with our partners through the Strategic School Partnership Board. It is our number one aspiration that all of</p>



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	<p>Oxfordshire's young people should attend a good school, and I am pleased to report that as of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017, 83% of Oxfordshire's state funded secondary schools were judged to be good or better, which ranks us 6<sup>th</sup> within our statistical neighbour group. (Lower than Wiltshire, where 93% of schools are good or better, but higher than Cambridgeshire (80%) and Buckinghamshire with 73%). In Oxfordshire:</p> <p>17% (6) are outstanding,  66% (23) good,  9%(3) requiring improvement and  9%(3) judged inadequate.  Of the 3 secondary schools remaining in Local Authority control, 2 are good and one was recently judged as inadequate.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member press to ensure that wherever possible the County (although the direction of travel in the past has been to remove the ability for local authorities to assist schools of all types in school improvement even though we are best placed both to anticipate what is happening rather than rely on random selection of schools by OFSTED, but also we are in some ways best placed) will help those schools not deteriorate too far and get into situation where they go into special measures.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>I don't know that we are best placed because if it is an academy of course we are pretty limited as to what we can do. However, what I would like to do is to grow rapport with the schools so that we actually (although it is not our remit to do that within the academy) help them along the process. I wouldn't like it to get to the stage certainly within our maintained schools that we have the OFSTED reports that we have had previously, that has turned the corner now though hopefully.</p>
<p><b>5. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</b></p> <p>How much has the County paid out in damages in each of the last four financial</p>	<p><b>COUCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</b></p> <p>The total amount paid out over the last four years in respect of all policy types (the significant types being Employers Liability, Fire, Motor Fleet, Officials</p>

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<p>years apportioned by the directorates in force at the time and what sum has been set aside for claims still under discussion or within the time limit for making a claim?</p>	<p>Indemnity; Public Liability &amp; Storm and Water damage)is set out below;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="882 292 1962 536"> <thead> <tr> <th>Directorate</th> <th>2013-2014</th> <th>2014-15</th> <th>2015-16</th> <th>2016-17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Children Young People &amp; Families</td> <td>£ 465,352</td> <td>£ 637,179</td> <td>£ 2,021,207</td> <td>£ 465,654</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social &amp; Community Services</td> <td>£ 47,731</td> <td>£ 17,913</td> <td>£ 12,346</td> <td>£ 31,821</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community Safety</td> <td>£ 95,615</td> <td>£ 41,026</td> <td>£ 235,216</td> <td>£ 152,340</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment &amp; Economy</td> <td>£ 750,499</td> <td>£ 819,771</td> <td>£ 1,162,935</td> <td>£ 915,150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corporate Services</td> <td>£ 29,877</td> <td>£ 11,179</td> <td>£ 2,564</td> <td>£ -</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td><b>£ 1,389,074</b></td> <td><b>£ 1,527,068</b></td> <td><b>£ 3,434,268</b></td> <td><b>£ 1,564,964</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Council has set aside £5.6m in provisions for claims which remain open at 31 March 2017 and £4.8m in provisions for claims relating to previous years that have not yet been received.</p>	Directorate	2013-2014	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Children Young People & Families	£ 465,352	£ 637,179	£ 2,021,207	£ 465,654	Social & Community Services	£ 47,731	£ 17,913	£ 12,346	£ 31,821	Community Safety	£ 95,615	£ 41,026	£ 235,216	£ 152,340	Environment & Economy	£ 750,499	£ 819,771	£ 1,162,935	£ 915,150	Corporate Services	£ 29,877	£ 11,179	£ 2,564	£ -	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 1,389,074</b>	<b>£ 1,527,068</b>	<b>£ 3,434,268</b>	<b>£ 1,564,964</b>
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<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>How will Council members in general be kept up to date with what is happening in this particular area. Is there a mechanism through either reports to Cabinet or Audit &amp; Governance or Performance Scrutiny where the amount that the Council is having to pay out in damages is reported to ordinary Councillors.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>In answer to why the provisions for future years are higher, his supposition is correct it is because they are open claims and estimated claims so those numbers may come down. With regard to a regular reporting mechanism, I am unsure how many councillors would be interested in receiving this information, but those that are; if they would let me know then I'll be delighted to set up some form of regular reporting mechanism.</p>																																			
<p><b>6. COUNCILLOR EMMA TURNBILL</b></p> <p>What assessment has been made of the impact of recent cuts to the County Council's housing related support budget, and the ending of automatic entitlement to housing support for out-of-work 18 to 21 year olds</p>	<p><b>COUCILLOR LAWRIE STRATFORD, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE</b></p> <p>People become homeless for a variety of reasons such as having lost a job, not being able to afford the rent or mortgage on their home, or following a relationship breakdown. Each individual's situation is unique and requires personalised support that helps them to improve their situation.</p>																																			

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<p>nationally, on the number of rough sleepers and vulnerably housed individuals in Oxford city centre and across the county?</p>	<p>In Oxfordshire, responsibility for homelessness is shared between the local housing authorities and the County Council, as the provider of social care, and is covered by different legislation.</p> <p>The County Council is committed to supporting homeless people to address immediate issues they are facing and to find sustainable long term solutions that work for them.</p> <p>We have retained this commitment at the time when our overall funding is continuing to reduce, whilst demand for statutory services continues to grow.</p> <p><b>What we are doing to prevent and address homelessness within limited resources</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="887 735 2029 1214"> <p><b>1) New housing related support plan</b> - From April 2017 we have pooled resources with all five local housing authorities and the clinical commissioning group to continue providing accommodation based services with support for 203 people. This provides £3 million of pooled funding over three years. Funding reductions are being jointly managed and monitored by all partners. The first reduction was to stop funding 83 units of low support accommodation. This has been implemented on 1 June 2017, with half of the people securing alternative accommodation in a planned way and other half planning to do so by the end of September. To date there was one eviction. The full impact of this decommissioning this service will be assessed in September. The second reduction in funding is planned in 1 April 2018. We are developing a robust plan with the providers and funding partners.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="887 1254 2029 1433"> <p><b>2) Community support service</b> – We are continuing to invest £600k in a countywide community based service for 315 people at any point in time who are vulnerably housed or need support to sustain their tenancies. This service is provided by Connection Support and they respond quickly and work very effectively with young people, single adults and families.</p> </li> </ol>

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	<p><b>3) Homelessness prevention trailblazer</b> – We recognise that the best answer to homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. This is why we have supported our partners to bid for Department for Communities and Local Government Trailblazer fund. Together we have secured £790,000 over two years to develop county-wide innovative approaches to tackle root causes of homelessness. This work is being led by Oxford City Council and will be starting this summer.</p> <p><b>Housing support for out-of-work 18 to 21 year olds</b></p> <p>Central government decision to end automatic entitlement to housing support for out-of-work 18 to 21 year olds are of concern to us and our housing partners. As a system we monitor potential impact of the national welfare reform on housing and homelessness under the auspices of the Health Improvement Board. The board receives regular reports on a set of housing indicators, which takes into account local intelligence about various types of households, including young people. This work will continue this year and will link into our prevention work under the Trailblazer programme.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Given the prevalence of mental health among homeless people especially those sleeping rough, it is essential that mental health support services have the flexibility needed to deliver effective treatment and consider multiply needs. Is there room therefore for better partnership work between Homeless Services, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Mental Health Services?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>Yes of course there is always room for improved communications. Part of the challenge on a number of issues – homelessness is one of them is partnership working for us as the County and with District and that needs to go beyond just housing services and housing services are primarily the responsibility of our District colleagues. To date we have worked well in trying to deal with those issues, even though we are not legal obliged. The concern I have got about homelessness is more for those people who for whatever reason are suffering from mental health issues and we have two communities. Those with the young and we have other issues with CAMS but also with our former Armed Service people who come back and find it quite difficult to resettle after some terrible experiences. I think there is every opportunity that future working with, not CCG</p>

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	<p>but a much wider range of voluntary organisations to improve their lot. However one of the issues that we must recognise is not all homelessness is unwanted. An incident in Bicester not long ago where somebody who was quite capable of living on his own had plenty of money chose to sleep rough in the town centre. We had all services involved, we managed to get him moved on, he was fined heavily for vagrancy came in wrote a cheque and the next day he was back on the bench again. So not all homelessness is a challenge but the special area you have mentioned about mental health is something that we have to address.</p>
<p><b>7. COUNCILLOR PAUL BUCKLEY</b></p> <p>“In view of the benefits to track-side Oxfordshire residents, in terms of reduce noise and diesel pollution, that would result from electrification of the main railway line northwards from Didcot, what action is the Cabinet Member for E&amp;E proposing, to apply pressure to Network Rail to revive the Didcot-Oxford electrification scheme that has been ‘paused’ since 2016?”</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Network Rail is midway through an ambitious £38 billion five-year investment programme up to 2019, funded by the UK Government, which includes electrification of the Great Western Mainline as part of a major route upgrade. With the cost of electrification having tripled in cost to an estimated £2.8 billion, the Secretary of State asked Sir Peter Hendy, the chairman of Network Rail to review of their Enhancement Delivery Plan to see what could be delivered in an affordable way and more efficiently with a better understanding of cost and the delivery challenges, and within the funding available from the Treasury in the current funding period until March 2019.</p> <p>The Hendy Report was published in November 2015 and concluded that replanning of some works would enable them to be delivered faster and with better value-for-money. The report confirmed that electrification will still go ahead, albeit some route sections will be delivered to a different timescale than originally planned, including the line between Didcot Parkway and Oxford which was to be delivered by June 2019 rather than in 2016.</p> <p>In a written statement to Parliament on 8 November 2016, Transport Minister Paul Maynard MP announced that electrification between Didcot Parkway and Oxford would be deferred; no completion date has been given. In addition, electrification has been removed from the scope of East West Rail meaning the</p>

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	<p>railway between Oxford and Milton Keynes will remain a diesel-operated route for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Whilst we are disappointed that the planned investment has been deferred, many of the benefits of electrification will be delivered in other ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The order for new Class 800/801 InterCity Express Trains has been changed so all trains will be bi-mode electro-diesel (rather than a mix of bi-mode and fully electric as originally proposed). It is worth noting that many of the Oxford-London 'fast' services will have used bi-mode trains anyway as they continue beyond Oxford to Worcester on the North Cotswolds Line which is not electrified; the changeover from electric to diesel will occur whilst the trains are on the move near Didcot rather than at Oxford. The only downside is that a bi-mode train when used in diesel mode is noisier and emits more pollution than a fully-electric train as they are heavier.</li> <li>2. In addition, Great Western Railway has invested £490 million in an additional fleet of new Class 802 trains to bolster the number of bi-mode trains, and some of these will be used on 'fast' services to Oxford.</li> <li>3. From January 2018, new Class 387 electric trains will begin operating Outer Thames Valley services from Didcot to Reading/London. To enable that to happen the existing 'stopping' service from Oxford to Reading will be replaced with a diesel shuttle service between Oxford and Didcot Parkway calling at Radley, Culham and Appleford stations, and this will connect with the new electric trains. Most passengers from these stations already change trains at Didcot onto fast trains to Reading and London so there will be minimal inconvenience.</li> </ol> <p>Oxfordshire will not have to make do with existing trains as the new electric rolling stock is not being put into store. The vast majority of people travelling from Oxford and Didcot will still benefit from new state-of-the-art trains, using electric power for most of their journey. The trains will be powered by diesel engines complying with the latest European Stage IIIB emissions regulations for non-road machinery, making them more environmentally friendly compared to</p>

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	<p>the trains they are replacing.</p> <p>Electrification itself will not have delivered the step-change in rail services that we think are needed to support a growing economy, and will not have provided the extra connectivity for residents and businesses.</p> <p>Since electrification was confirmed in 2010, it has become obvious that a lack of capacity to operate more trains will become a major constraint in less than five years. This now has to be the top priority for rail investment in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The railway south of Oxford is already operating over 90% of its capacity and without extra infrastructure it will not be possible to increase the number of trains beyond those expected to be running in 2019, regardless of whether they are diesel or electric-powered trains.</p> <p>Deferring electrification is therefore an opportunity to develop this nationally important rail corridor through the Knowledge Spine so it has better capability and more capacity to deal with the demand as Oxfordshire's, and the United Kingdom, economy and population grows.</p> <p>Without extra track and station capacity between Oxford and Didcot, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the following key rail objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East West Rail Phase 2 services being extended from Oxford to Didcot and Reading;</li> <li>• New services to Cowley, with stations at Oxford Science Park and Oxford Business Park having potential to facilitate sustainable new housing at Grenoble Road;</li> <li>• Direct services from Oxford/Didcot to Heathrow Airport once the new rail link into the airport opens in 2024;</li> <li>• A half-hourly service from Oxford (and beyond, via East West Rail) to Swindon, Bath and Bristol;</li> <li>• Increased service frequency between centres of growth in the Knowledge</li> </ul>

Questions	Answers
	<p>Spine, for example at Didcot, Culham and Oxford, with more trains calling at Culham linked to new housing and employment around the station;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New rail links within Oxfordshire, for example by extending the diesel shuttle service beyond Oxford to Hanborough, and improving services to Banbury.</li> </ul> <p>It is not in our best interest to seek a review of the government’s decision. We cannot wait for decades before the railway catches up with our growth agenda; expanding the existing railway will be less complicated and less expensive without electrification.</p> <p>When electrification does take place, it should be of an upgraded, higher capacity railway. In the meantime we will strive for a better deal for Oxfordshire by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with Great Western Railway to understand how the passenger benefits of electrification, such as more seats and faster journeys, are going to be secured;</li> <li>2. Working with Network Rail to identify and bring-forward enhancements that deliver extra track and station capacity and, where necessary, seek to safeguard the land required in the relevant Local Plan;</li> <li>3. Work with OxLEP, the Growth Board and other partners to lobby the Department for Transport to commit funding that will allow Network Rail to start development work on enhancements to be delivered before 2024, in the same way that £27 million has been committed to further develop the Oxford-Cambridge expressway;</li> <li>4. Seeking to better align investment in strategic transport infrastructure, including rail, with the location of strategic development sites to maximise their viability and value for money;</li> <li>5. Submitting proposals to the Department for Transport setting out our ambitions for the next Great Western franchise, due to commence in April 2020.</li> </ol>



<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>In Councillor Constance’s reply she says and I quote “It is not in our interests to seek a review of the Government’s decision” and I must say I was surprised by this answer because I know that there are many Oxfordshire residents living alongside the railway line who would have benefited greatly from the reduction in diesel fumes and noise that would have come with electrification and so my question is – Is she not prepared to seek a review of the Government’s decision for the sake of these many Oxfordshire residents.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>I think it is an excellent question for highlighting the important paragraph I did want to stress. The reason it is not in our best interest is that once funding is decided it is best to leave the terms and specifications for that funding untouched at least until the funding round is completed. Work does go on to attempt to ensure that there would be electrification beyond the current programme but that is not currently in the schedule. There are other areas in which the officers work constantly to keep the interests of Oxfordshire residents high on the agenda. but it is not right now that we could make public a review of that decision it remains on the agenda.</p>
<p><b>8. COUNCILLOR LIZ LEFFMAN</b></p> <p>“The OVO Cycling Tour of Britain will be crossing Oxfordshire in the 7<sup>th</sup> stage of the race on September 9th. Many of Oxfordshire’s minor roads are in poor state, notably some of those that the race will be using. Can the Cabinet Member for Environment reassure members that the route will be inspected before the event, and can she tell members what steps will be taken to remedy any defects that this might throw up, which could compromise the safety of this high profile event?”</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council Highway Coordination Team (HCT) met with the OVO Energy Tour of Britain organisers in early June to discuss the race route and traffic management requirements.</p> <p>A road condition survey of the route within Oxfordshire has already been arranged to be undertaken by a Highway Inspector. Any serious highway defects reported during this inspection will be scheduled for repair prior to the race taking place, in line with current defect repair procedures. This race last took place in Oxfordshire in 2012 and a similar procedure was undertaken to ensure defects were repaired.</p> <p>The HCT work closely with event organisers to ensure public highways are suitable (if the activity is appropriate) for events such as cycling races and to coordinate these activities to avoid clashes with roadworks and other events.</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	<p>The team attends Safety Advisory Groups to advise event organisers regarding 'best practice' guidance and relevant legislation requirements in the planning and execution of their events. We will be receiving event documentation regarding the Tour of Britain from the event organiser in due course for review and comment.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>How much money has been put aside for this particular exercise and how is that going to affect the roads programme for the rest of the County.</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>Thank you, I cannot answer the questions as to how much has been put aside because of course it will depend upon the condition of the road. There is a provision in the budget for urgent and necessary works and it would seem to me that this would fit entirely within it. I will be sure to check the details insofar as they can be given and let you know in writing.</p>
<p><b>9. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</b></p> <p>One of the best ways to reduce pollution and congestion is to encourage people to leave their cars at home and use other forms of transport. In Oxford about 17% of people travel to work by bike. That's not bad. However, in Cambridge it is 29% and in several cities in mainland Europe it is about <b>40%</b>. What is our aspiration and by when?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>I agree that one of the best ways to reduce pollution and congestion is to encourage people to leave their cars at home and use other forms of transport. There would also be significant physical and mental health benefits.</p> <p>As part of our LTP adoption, an amendment was passed at Full Council which stated that LTP4 should be strengthened in its aim to reduce air pollution and that walking and cycling should be encouraged more positively. In response to this amendment, the LTP4 update included a new Active &amp; Healthy Travel Strategy (AHTS) which outlines how walking, cycling and Door to Door travel can become a feasible choice for all. Implementation of the Strategy is overseen by an Active &amp; Healthy Travel Steering Group that includes representatives from OCC Transport and Public Health, the City &amp; District Councils, Oxfordshire Sport &amp; Physical Activity and user representatives.</p> <p>While several cities in mainland Europe have significantly higher levels of walking and cycling than the UK, at this stage we have not proposed specific</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>targets for levels of cycle use, although this is something we could consider as we develop this work further. It is important to state that Oxfordshire County Council does not have its own capital funding, so we are dependent on funding bids and developer funding. With this in mind, we have recently updated our Walking &amp; Cycling Design Standards to reflect best practice and help us secure more funding.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>Surely we ought to have an aspiration to match Cambridge with the proportion of people cycling or at least draw half way close to it and I hope she will agree that we should come up with an aspiration and publish it because it could help us to achieve more and if she doesn't agree with that I would like to know why not?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>It is much easier to agree with you Councillor Pressel.</p>
<p><b>10. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</b></p> <p>Various measures are being planned or discussed to improve air quality in Oxfordshire. However, things are moving much too slowly. In some parts of my division air quality is <i>getting worse</i>. There is quite rightly huge public concern about this, as the serious health impacts become better known. How can we speed up the planned improvements?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Whilst air quality monitoring by the City Council confirms NO2 levels across Oxford have dropped by 35% in the last ten years, air quality levels on Botley Road, between 2015 and 2016, have increased at a number of monitoring stations.</p> <p>A review of the long term traffic trends for Botley Road confirms that traffic is reducing on the inner cordon (i.e. near Osney Bridge) and is generally stable at the outer cordon (west of Seacourt Park &amp; Ride). There was however a reduction in traffic levels on Botley Road during the construction of Frideswide Square</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	<p>(during 2014 and 2015) which may explain why pollution levels increased in 2016. Further monitoring is required before we can be certain of this and so we look for to analysing future results when they become available.</p> <p>Whilst the longer term trends are positive there is clearly more work to be done to improve air quality in Oxfordshire. The County Council's Local Transport Plan, which, as part of the Oxford Transport Strategy, has an ambition agenda and a much stronger focus on mass transit, walking and cycling, in combination with measures to reduce traffic congestion whilst improving air quality.</p> <p>Proposals include introducing a zero emission zone in Oxford city centre by 2020, enabling the creation of a city-wide zero-emission zone by 2035. A joint County and City Council study on this is already underway and is due to be published soon.</p> <p>The County Council has also been developing further proposals for mass transit, pedestrian and cycle improvements on the city's main transport corridors. This will put us in a stronger position to secure specific improvements or funding from developments and take advantage of central government funding opportunities when they arise. We are already delivering the Access to Headington project, a £12.5m package of improvements that will deliver the first phase of infrastructure required to achieve mass transit and cycle networks in that area. And very recently we submitted a bid for £5m of government funding to implement public transport, pedestrian and cycle improvements along the Botley Road corridor, and if successful, these measures would be in place by 2020.</p> <p>Work is also being undertaken to consider whether a workplace parking levy or a congestion charging scheme would be right for Oxford and this is to be reported in an outline business case at a future Cabinet meeting. If implemented this would help to manage traffic growth in the city and provide a more reliable funding stream to help deliver the ambitions of the Oxford Transport Strategy, including reducing transport-related air pollution in Oxford and beyond.</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>We keep hearing about the aspiration for a zero emission zone in Oxford City Centre by 2020. I would like to know please exactly what that means. Does it mean that only electric vehicles will be able to drive in Oxford City Centre by 2020 because if so that gives us only 2 or 3 years to sell our vehicles and buy different ones if we want to drive through Oxford City Centre so please could you explain?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>The answer is that the intention for a lower and no emission zone must depend essentially upon electric vehicles and of course walking and cycling and those are very much part of the scheme that is being considered for all of the City and as far as possible for many of those coming into the City.</p>
<p><b>11. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</b></p> <p>Some councils, e.g. Gateshead and Brighton are being praised for managing their grass verges for wildlife and wildflowers. How does Oxfordshire compare?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>We are not aware of any bench marking data and can therefore not comment on how we measure up against other councils. However we do maintain Road Side Nature Reserves, identify and save rare plants i.e. Lizard Orchid on A4074 and avoid premature cuts when possible. The following link gives guidance on how to look after and designate road verge nature reserves - <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/road-verge-nature-reserves">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/road-verge-nature-reserves</a></p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</b></p> <p>I gather we have only about 35 roadside nature reserves. Can we designate more of them and what more can we do to improve the biodiversity of our County?</p>	<p><b>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</b></p> <p>It is a relief to have a question that actually asks for more overgrown verges in my part of the County. The great difficulty is that with only one cut a year we can barely see our way through some of the narrow unclassified roads. There is probably at the moment with only one cut a year no need to have identified separate specific nature reserves, but the answer is that there is a lot of attention given to the guidance on this and our current policies serves that well.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p><b>12. COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER</b></p> <p>As it is now a year since the County Council embarked on its ambitious transformation programme, 'Fit for the Future', it would be timely for members to understand what has been delivered so far, how much has been invested and how much saved. Will the Cabinet member explain the project's progress, in the context of its overall investment programme and intended business outcomes?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR LINDSAY-GALE, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY &amp; CULTURAL SERVICES</b></p> <p>In total, one-off funding of £6.9m has been identified for the Fit for the Future Programme which was approved by Cabinet in April 2017. The planning and preparation began in 2016/17 but the majority of costs will fall in 2017/18 and 2018/19. This one-off investment will enable services to transform and through re-design allow the delivery of £15m on-going savings across the Council expected from April 2018 onwards.</p> <p>A cross-council Project Management Office (PMO) to support and coordinate all projects and programmes has been in place from April 2017 and most of the digital technology we require will be in place by the end of July. The refresh of ICT equipment and provision of new collaboration tools to support flexible working is underway and is expected to complete in December.</p> <p>The next stage of the Management Review will commence this summer and report in the Autumn. This month all staff will contribute to an Activity Analysis which to establish a full profile of the current operational work of the Council. In some libraries we are trialling digital assistance for customers. The first examples of digital services for Fire &amp; Rescue Service and Adult Social Care will go live in July and September respectively. Locality reviews to establish the best use of community assets are now underway in a schedule that will ultimately embrace the whole county.</p> <p>These and other actions will inform the service redesign work being led by Directors to deliver the expected savings.</p> <p>Key features of the investment programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External expertise to support the implementation of a one council approach on data management and business intelligence</li> <li>• Additional temporary resources in the areas of technology, project</li> </ul>

Questions	Answers
	<p>management and business analysis and to ensure that some OCC staff can be dedicated to the Fit for the Future programme without prejudicing day to day operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing the technology to enable the broadest range of services to be available on-line and self-service, putting in place the necessary support in place to help those who need it</li> <li>• Establishing locality reviews to make the best use of community assets and to move services and support closer to local</li> <li>• Additional support to actively manage demand and reduce running costs – particularly in Children’s Services</li> </ul> <p>The intended outcomes of the Fit for the Future Programme are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will improve and simplify the customer experience,</li> <li>• It will reshape our services ensuring they is a digital offer where possible</li> <li>• It will integrate and streamline systems and processes</li> <li>• It will ensure we take a whole place approach to our service delivery and make the most of our assets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13. COUNCILLOR JEANNETTE MATELOT</b></p> <p>Ten years ago St Andrew's primary school, Chinnor, was scheduled to be rebuilt under the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme. Then, in 2010, the new Coalition government realised the devastating scale of the UK's deficit, and the BSF programme had to be halted as a result. This was just as the work was due to start at St Andrew's. It is now a decade since the County Council agreed that St Andrew's was in a dilapidated</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR LINDSAY-GALE, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY &amp; CULTURAL SERVICES</b></p> <p>I am as frustrated as the local member by the choices we have had to make in respect of St Andrew’s school, for as the member says, all of us wanted to rebuild the school rather than repair it.</p> <p>The local member is right that in 2009/10 the replacement of the school buildings was identified as a priority by the Council, and that we worked with St Andrews School to submit a bid for inclusion in the Government’s Primary Capital Programme, a national programme intended to rebuild or refurbish at least half of all primary schools over a 15 year period</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p>state and supported the school's bid for BSF funding. Does the Cabinet member agree that patching and mending have become a false economy, and it's time to take radical measures for the sake of this outstanding school's future?</p>	<p>He is also right that, as part of the deficit reduction measures implemented by the coalition government in 2010 the Primary Capital Programme was cancelled and the scheme at St Andrews School was therefore unable to be taken forward as originally proposed.</p> <p>This meant that the option to rebuild St Nicholas was no longer available to us and we had instead to focus on how we could use the grants we get for maintenance and basic need to improve the school site.</p> <p>The Council has worked closely with the Headteacher and governors to invest around £1.7m in the existing buildings to both address the priority repair and maintenance needs and plan for future growth in pupil numbers.</p> <p>The Council would have much preferred to construct a new school rather than patching and repair old buildings. However, I hope the member can see that we have worked hard with St Andrew's to use the funds we do have in the most effective way we can, and that whilst this is not what either us or the school would have wanted, it is the best use of the money in circumstances that were not of our making. It is also serves as another example of why the Council is now focused on investment to use our estate to raise capital so that we can better manage our buildings and support all the services we deliver from them.</p> <p>Finally it is worth celebrating that despite the difficulties of their building St Andrew's gained an 'Outstanding' rating by Ofsted following inspection in May 2013 and we do hope that the further investment planned will help to maintain this outstanding standard going forward.</p>
<p><b>14. COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER</b></p> <p>Following the Government's business rates review, I am being asked by residents in the Thame &amp; Chinnor area how the new rates have been assessed for local pubs. Their</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</b></p> <p>In accordance with the changes announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the budget in March this year, from April 2017, all pubs are eligible for a £1,000 discount on their rates bill. Furthermore, where a pub is the only one in a village and the rateable value is less that £12,000, they are entitled to rural rate</p>



<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<p>interest stems from recent reports by the pub industry that 1 in every 5 of pub closures nationwide since 2010 was directly attributable to high business rates. There is, therefore, a need for clarity about what discounts and relief are available to pubs in Oxfordshire, even successful ones, under the new scheme and what the 'local discretionary fund' consists of. Can the Cabinet member reassure pubs such as the multi-award-winning 'Cross Keys' in Thame that the business rates review will not merely penalise successful pubs for their success?</p>	<p>relief. The new local discretionary fund is targeted at those businesses that, as a result of the revaluation which took effect this April, saw the most significant increases in their bills. The details of the scheme are determined locally by district councils and consultation is required with businesses and the relevant precepting authority (the county council). The funding has been allocated to district councils based on the number of properties with rateable values of under £200,000 and experiencing an increase in rates from the previous year before other reliefs of more than 12.5%. The city and district councils are proposing a standard scheme for Oxfordshire, but allowing for local discretion. It is expected that details of the scheme will be agreed by each of the authorities by the end of August.</p>
<p><b>15. COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER</b></p> <p>The National Literacy Trust has reported recently that the reading habit is declining among children between the ages of 8 and 16, and this trend is particularly prevalent among boys. The Trust has found that among boys, reading enjoyment fell from 72% at ages 8-11 to 36% at ages 14-16. For girls at ages 8-11, 83% said they enjoyed reading, but this dropped to 53% at ages 14-16. In the light of the Trust's report, will the Cabinet member recap on the County Council's reading project, which was showing encouraging results a couple of years ago?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR HIBBERT-BILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH &amp; EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Oxfordshire's Reading Campaign, initiated in 2012, focused on the recruitment, training and coordination of volunteers to hear children read in Oxfordshire primary schools. Leadership of the Campaign was contracted to the National Literacy Trust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 63 Oxfordshire primary schools took part</li> <li>• 85 teaching assistants and 126 teachers were trained</li> <li>• Over 800 pupils received the Project X Code intervention</li> <li>• 209 volunteers worked with 269 pupils</li> </ul> <p>The <a href="#">2014 evaluation report</a> details the achievements and challenges. Some positive impact on pupil outcomes in reading are recorded.</p> <p>Since 2014 several other reading projects have run in Oxfordshire, for example 'Every Child a Reader', funded through Schools Forum, and the Gaining Momentum project, funded by OCC and delivered in secondary schools by the</p>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
	<p data-bbox="880 221 2029 325">National Literacy Trust. A voluntary sector project to support volunteers in schools 'ARCh' currently covers 100 Oxfordshire primary schools with volunteers hearing 750 children read each week.</p> <p data-bbox="880 368 2029 547">Local authorities are no longer in a position to commission large-scale projects such as the Reading Campaign, and schools, particularly academies, are now more autonomous, responsible for choosing and developing their own improvement programmes. The local authority role is as an enabler, working with partner organisations, such as ARCh.</p> <p data-bbox="880 590 2029 694">Oxfordshire primary school data from 2016 shows that compared with the national figure, Oxfordshire's children achieve more highly in reading than in writing. This is also likely to be the case in 2017.</p> <p data-bbox="880 737 2029 916">Once the 2017 data for reading and writing outcomes at Key Stages 1 and 2 is available, it is proposed that a 'Think Tank' approach is employed enabling a wide range of schools and partners to evaluate what currently makes a difference in reading, but particularly in writing, and for vulnerable pupils, as these are areas of current underperformance in Oxfordshire.</p>