

CABINET – 21 MAY 2013

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions received from the following Members:

Question from Councillor Janet Godden to Ian Hudspeth

“Please can full consideration be given as soon as possible to the creation of a scrutiny committee for adult social care? You will remember that in the course of the debate on the new governance arrangements at the April Council meeting several members questioned the absence of this. The main reasons put forward in favour were the size of the budget and the scale and complexity of the service. It was argued that the Performance scrutiny committee would not have the time to review this adequately; and that in terms of finance and of service delivery adult social care is one of our highest risk areas. To put it under a ‘Health’ umbrella overlooks much of the work (esp. re disabilities). No reasons were advanced in April against having such a committee; to reject it for administrative reasons would seem to be letting the tail wag the dog. To wait for the first review of the new arrangements in a year’s time seems excessive. Please can this be looked at now?”

Answer:

“The new scrutiny arrangements came about following a cross party review group. All the proposals were put forward to the Conservative group at frequent stages during the review, they were fully debated with comments fed back to the cross party working group, I would hope that other groups within the council followed the same open and democratic process. There will be a review of the new arrangements and that is the time to consider any changes.”

Question from Councillor Jean Fooks to Councillor David Nimmo-Smith

“There is much concern about cycle safety in Oxford and throughout the county. I hope that cyclist safety will be a top priority for you in your new role. Large lorries pose particular risks and with the expected huge amount of construction planned for the city it is more important than ever that all possible ways to improve safety and reduce risk are implemented. Some time ago I asked about the provision of ‘Trixi mirrors’ at junctions, to enable lorries to see cyclists on their near sides – these are inexpensive and easy to install. It is also possible to require lorries to have safety rails and they could themselves have better nearside mirrors. Could you tell me when you will ask

officers to investigate which junctions should be fitted with Trixi mirrors, when they might be installed and whether you will seek powers to improve the safety features on large lorries?”

Answer:

“The use of ‘Trixi’ mirrors in Oxfordshire was considered following the issuing of a general authorisation of their use by the Department for Transport in February this year. However, results including those published by the Institute for Road Safety Research in The Netherlands suggest that such mirrors are not an effective way of reducing collisions involving lorries and cyclists. In view of this we currently have no plans to provide them, but will review closely the experience of other authorities in England—in particular London where we understand a significant number have been installed – to establish if any benefits are reported, and if so, will then consider their use.

The issue of improving safety features on lorries is not in the gift of OCC but sits with DfT and VOSA”.