

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 CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>Does the Leader consider that there is any substance in the reported possible bid for Unitary Oxford City Governance?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>If you read the article in the Oxford Mail 21 April 2014 it would appear that there is substance in a possible bid for Oxford City Governance.</p> <p>In the article it is clear that the Leader of the City, Councillor Bob Price, has had a discussion with the reporter Damian Fantato that has led to the quotes. It is clear that Cllr Price believes that should Labour win the General Election the Labour policy will be to implement the Adonis recommendations however my understanding of the Adonis report is that the recommendations will be similar to Lord Heseltine's view that it should be on County boundaries. It is clear that Cllr Price realises that the small size of the City council is an issue by talking about land grabbing Kidlington, Botley and land south of Grenoble Road however even then it would not be of sufficient size to be a functional economic area. Where next will Cllr Price turn his sights on, Abingdon, Eynsham and Kennington?</p> <p>I did raise the question about this article at a recent City County bilateral; Cllr Price said it was pure speculation related to a question at the City council. I did ask had he read the article and he replied he did not read the Oxford Mail. I did ask him was the City Council working on a Unitary bid and he assured me that no work was taking place at the City Council on a Unitary bid. So to that end it would appear there is no substance in the article that Damian Fantato wrote on 21 April 2014.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>As there is no substance to the contents of the article in the Oxford Mail on 21 April, would the Leader kindly comment further on Councillor Bob Price's dreams and how they</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Thank you very much for the question. I have to start by reminding everybody that it is no up to local government to say if and when a reorganisation takes place, that is something for central government. I will work with whatever colour central government is to get the best deal for the residents of Oxfordshire. Certainly the current government</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>reflect in the best interests of Oxfordshire?</p>	<p>is saying that there is absolutely no chance of a reorganisation of local government unless all councils agree and somehow I don't see that happening in Oxfordshire at the moment. What Councillor Bob Price was referring to is the Adonis report which is due out later on today, I understand. Lord Adonis is going to be saying a similar thing to Lord Heseltine in his no stone unturned report with suggested working on economical functional areas, such as the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) which in this case in Oxfordshire is co-terminus with the county boundaries, it is also co-terminus with the Clinical Commissioning Group as well, so there is some synergy there.</p> <p>What we have got to remember is that if there is a reorganisation of local government this council delivers 75% of local government services across Oxfordshire. It is quite simple, it means we have one social services department, one children's services department, one highways department, one fire service, one trading standards, one registration service, one library service. If we went to Councillor Bob Prices' proposal of four unitary authorities in Oxfordshire we would have four highways departments, four social services departments, four children's services departments, we heard earlier the fantastic work that the children's services departments are doing would we want to split that down. We would have four fire services, four library services, four registration services along with four HR services, four finance departments. What he is suggesting would actually increase the cost of local government to the tax payer. If we have one unitary authority then we only have one of each department. I can think of a couple other areas that are quite sensitive, we have five Chief Executive Officers in Oxfordshire costing £573,000 a year to the tax payer. If we go down to Councillor Bob Prices' proposal we would probably have four Chief Executive Officers all earning about £145,000 in other words no savings. However, if we had one unitary authority we would save £400,000 straight away, no messing around, one Chief Executive Officer that is all you need.</p> <p>I will finish off talking about Councillors, there are 309 County, District and City Councillors across Oxfordshire, costing £2.3 million per annum. If we go to Councillor Bob Prices' four unitary authority we would probably end up with 200-250 councillors, yes there would be savings, but not sufficient. If we went to one unitary model, we could go from 63 to about 97. If I went round and knocked on the doors of the residents of Oxfordshire and said I've got a plan to save nearly £2 million by getting rid of 5 Chief</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>Executives Officers and nearly 200 councillors, they would simply turn round to me and say get on with the job Ian, deliver those services that we protect and value in Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>For many years there have been continual complaints from local residents with regard to the supervision and management of the adult social care hostel on Iffley Road. After long and detailed consultation between officers of the County Council and local residents that appeared to produce a series of changes of operational policy in the spring of this year and a commitment to hold a public meeting to illustrate the new policies at the 11th hour Councillor Tilley stepped in and said that there would be no public meeting to illustrate what changes would be made.</p> <p>Could the Portfolio holder explain why she did this when a full public consultation outlining the changes that are to be made would have been well received by local residents and would have had no impact whatever on contractual retendering.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>One Foot Forward continues to be an area of focus for the Contracts & Performance Manager with weekly updates from the Project Manager on client and staff issues and meetings with the area manager and children’s services lead within BCHA every six to eight weeks to review progress of their Oxford services including safeguarding, bullying and risk management. In addition we have a number of initiatives in development to improve the quality of support and opportunities for young people using the service including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our internal multi-agency risk training delivered to staff of BCHA services in April • Partnership work with Thames Valley police to deliver support to OFF on gang related issues. • The setting up of training for BCHA and other provider staff on young people and domestic violence by our new YP IDVA lead, Jo Foster – due to take place shortly • A project with Luther Street medical centre to train the local GP practice to One Foot Forward (in the nearby Temple Street) in areas that specifically relate to homeless people <p>As well as the above, we maintain regular contact with the service and receive regular updates when there are serious incidents or issues of concern such as media causing disturbance outside the project or any complaints. There is also feedback from our operational staff which is monitored and followed up with the provider where necessary.</p> <p>I think we are doing everything we can to minimise the disruption to residents and so did not see a good reason for a public meeting.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>3. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Would the Cabinet member give consideration to the overwhelming views of the people of Risinghurst that the solution to the problems of the junction of Collinwood road and the A40 is a set of traffic lights with an inbuilt pedestrian crossing sequence?</p> <p>Would he accept that by moving the present bus filter lights down from their present position prior to the Green Road roundabout this would be a cost effective and permanent resolution to what in the past has been a very dangerous junction?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>When I considered a report into the objections that had been received to the experimental closure of the gap on A40 at Collinwood Road, it was noted by officers that “previous outline feasibility work looking at the introduction of signals at this location has suggested that full signalisation could risk eastbound traffic blocking back to Green Road roundabout however it would enable the introduction of improved pedestrian crossing facilities to replace the current uncontrolled crossing”. That remains our concern.</p> <p>Moving the inbound bus lane signals does seem like an opportunity but it won’t alter the concerns about the effect on outbound traffic and it would reduce the effectiveness of the bus lane just as we are investing in improvements to the Green Road roundabout to further help buses.</p> <p>In addition there is the question of how any works here might be funded. We have previously estimated that simply to put in a signalled pedestrian crossing across A40 would be in the region of £150,000 – a fully signalled junction would be significantly more and currently there is no prospect of such funding being available for this project</p> <p>Of course the current arrangements at Collinwood Road with the gap closed (albeit with temporary barriers) does mean that we have dealt with the principle accident problem (in the 5 years prior to the introduction of the closure there were 11 reported injury accidents at this location 4 involving vehicles turning right into Collinwood Road and 5 involving vehicles turning right out of Collinwood Road).</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would the portfolio holder give a commitment that he will launch a consultation process with the people to find out what the real views are and what people see as the solution to this particular problem? Would he actually go and knock on a few doors, Councillor Smith and I</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Well it was round about a year ago that I was asked as part of my delegated decisions to deal with this and to make it permanent or remove it and there was consultation at that time. Life hasn’t really moved on much since then and the situation is still the same as it was at that point. So this is probably not the right time for a further consultation but it is still on the agenda, it is still an aspiration to do a permanent situation and to sort it out properly in this area. I would point out there is actually a subway at the roundabout</p>

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<p>will be with him, while he does that or launch a public debate in the local Unitarian church, that will be the ideal solution, would he do that for us?</p>	<p>which is a much safer way of crossing the road.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Would the Cabinet member responsible for transport agree with me that the road surface of London Road Headington between the shops and the ring road has now completely disintegrated and that Cowley Road for its whole length is in a very poor state of repair the road reduced to little more than a patchwork quilt of temporary repairs?</p> <p>Would the portfolio holder provide a date when the long suffering people of Oxford will see these two stretched of road resurfaced?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The Cabinet member would agree that the road surface in London Road between the shops and the ring road is very poor. The Council have had a scheme in the capital programme to reconstruct the road for some time. There is however also a scheme to improve the bus lanes in this same length of road following a successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid last year and therefore the repair scheme has had to be delayed in order to prevent the carriageway being dug up again for the new bus lane and to ensure that the impact on drivers, residents and businesses whilst both of these works are undertaken is minimised. Both schemes are therefore planned to be undertaken during the autumn and winter of this year. In the meantime however, the Council have instigated a find and fix approach to potholes in this length of road to ensure that safety is maintained and further deterioration mitigated as early as possible.</p> <p>Cowley Road is in a considerably better state of repair than London Road and other roads in the county. Whilst it is accepted the that there have been many repairs to potholes in the surface and to utilities in the last few years which have detracted from the visual aesthetic of the road, the structure of the carriageway is generally sound. Much of the patching work undertaken has been in preparation of a scheme in place this year to surface dress the carriageway in one area to ensure that cracks were properly sealed to prevent further deterioration. A recent inspection has shown however that the surface has deteriorated more rapidly than expected and means that surface dressing is no longer appropriate and therefore requires a more substantial scheme than initially envisaged. Engineers are currently assessing an appropriate treatment to replace the surface dressing. It is hoped that this can still be completed this financial year but will be dependent on the nature of the finalised scheme.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>5. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Will the portfolio holder for transport be backing the Space for Cycling campaign? (see www.ctc.org.uk/spaceforcycling/councillors)</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>We welcome the Space for Cycling Campaign, and I am broadly in favour of many of the aims and objectives of the campaign. I am delighted to let you know that the County Council is currently reviewing how we can improve cycling in the county. In September 2013, Councillors unanimously agreed that a new Cycling Strategy for the county should be drawn up.</p> <p>The Cycling Strategy is currently being developed as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4. The final draft of the Strategy is planned to be completed by the end of this year and to go out for public consultation in January 2015. During 2014, a draft of the Strategy will be shared with the Oxfordshire Cycling Network, which includes representatives of most of the major cycling groups and organisations in the county, including CTC, in order to obtain a user view.</p> <p>The Space for Cycling campaign rightly identifies cycling as an activity that can boost the economy, cut congestion, improve health and reduce pollution. It is a matter of concern to me that, nationally, 67% of people say they aren't confident cycling on busy roads. As well as consulting with cycling groups about the Cycling Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council will be consulting with occasional cyclists or people who do not currently cycle but would like to do so.</p> <p>Thank you again for raising this important issue with me. I hope that you will feed your thoughts and ideas into the process, either via the Oxfordshire Cycling Network or through the consultation process in early 2015.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would he be open to the idea of increasing the proportion of transport spending that is spent specifically on infrastructure for cyclists?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am in favour of increasing spending on all aspects of transport across the city and across the county as a whole. Continuing to build roads and continuing to actually increase road capacity is not necessarily an option anymore because what we don't want to do is to have yet more cars on roads, we want to give people the option for cycling, buses, trains, monorails, trams whatever so the answer is yes.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>6. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Is the Portfolio holder for HR aware that in many of the sub contracts that are being awarded certain practices are very common? They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory unpaid training • employment for an unspecified length of time "shadowing" at an unspecified "shadowing rate" • £7.50 an hour (below the living wage threshold) • Employees provide their own car and insurance at below sustainable rates. • Employees provides their own uniform • Employee pays £60 up front for CRB/DBS check • Employees on Zero hours contract i.e. only getting paid for the actual time with the client, not for the time spent travelling job to job with reduced entitlement to holiday pay pensions and redundancy right. <p>Could I ask will the Cabinet member outlaw these practices in further contracting and regard them as bad practice when identified in existing contracts?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, DEPUTY LEADER</p> <p>The County Council recognises the role commissioning authorities can play in creating opportunities for employers to offer good terms and conditions for their staff. We also acknowledge that whilst we look to reduce our direct costs by contracting for services, a provider needs to be remunerated sufficiently to pay their staff at an appropriate level and deliver a good quality service.</p> <p>By way of illustration, to ensure that this is the case in the area of home support our procurement processes require care agencies to declare how they calculate their hourly rate. This was an initiative we started some time ago (2006) and the cost components we ask for include elements that you have asked about e.g. we require employers to allocate figures for an employee's pay, training, downtime and travel among others. We ask for this information so that we can be sure that any bid received is a viable bid and that the provider will have the capacity and capability to deliver a quality service.</p> <p>However when it comes to employment the precise terms and conditions on offer are a matter for the employer and employee and it is the employer's responsibility to make sure that they offer conditions sufficient to attract and retain staff and comply with any statutory requirements. Should any provider be found guilty of breaching any employment law then clearly we would regard that as a matter of concern and would address it through our contract management processes.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Does Councillor Rose not think that it might be a good idea to at least produce some</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Through you Chairman, I really do think that it is national legislation that control these sorts of issues.</p>

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<p>guidance for people who want to have contracts with us on what we expect good employment conditions to be for example not charging up front for their own CRB checks.</p>	
<p>7. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that the New Care Act would seem to create a very bureaucratic system for calming on-going community care and that at the end of the day the new ceiling of personal payments of £83,000 has been pitched so that very few people will benefit from such a cap the majority having died before the full state support becomes operative. Could the portfolio holder say what the actual impact of the new legislation will be on the County Councils finances?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE</p> <p>It is too early to say. Draft Regulations will not be published until the Autumn. I am happy to brief members when we have more information.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member give a commitment to do a briefing session on the financial implications of this new Act to all members when we know the exact operational details and at a later stage give an indication, again through briefings to members, of the actual costs to the local authority, we do have vagaries emanating from the legislation itself as to what the cost will be, would the portfolio holder give us that commitment.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Through you Chairman, more than happy to make both those commitments, to brief all members on the financial implications of the Act when we know more.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>8. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW</p> <p>Both Conservative and Labour Members of this Council have expressed concern that the current level of Councillor Allowances make it very difficult for those who are not independently wealthy or supported by a partner or retired, to afford to represent their community. The recent report by the LGA showing the average age of Councillors is over 60 supports this concern.</p> <p>In order to inform the debate, could the Leader please ask officers to prepare an analysis of Councillor Allowances across the country that can be scrutinised by the Independent Remuneration Committee and this Council?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>There will be a full review by the Independent Remuneration Panel during the Autumn, all councillors will be able to make representations I suggest that Cllr Bartholomew makes his comments direct to them, if they wish to use comparisons then the work could be done quickly to provide the data.</p> <p>They will then determine the level of remuneration.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Could the Executive seek clarification of Councillor status as Central Government seems very clear that we are volunteers, but HMRC is seeking to tax travel expenses as if Councillors were employees?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Thank you very much for the question there, I am sure that that is an issue between Customs & Excise who are actually looking at the expenses and whether they are taxable or not. But I am sure the Independent Remuneration Committee will look at all cases and take on board all views and I recommend every member to put forward their own thoughts as to what should be in that report to make sure it is a good review.</p>
<p>9. COUNCILLOR GILL SANDERS</p> <p>What relationship has the Regional Commissioner for Schools got with the Local Authority?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>The Council has been advised that the Regional Schools Commissioner covering Oxfordshire is Martin Post, current head teacher of Watford Boys' Grammar School. He will take up his post on 1st September 2014 although the Hemel Hempstead Office which will accommodate him and a small team of civil servants was scheduled to open</p>

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	<p>on 1st July. Officers will be seeking to establish contact with Mr Post at the earliest possible opportunity.</p> <p>Following a face to face meeting between Council officers and the School Commissioner, I am pleased to be able to report that a very positive relationship with Martin Post is anticipated. There should be regular meetings between him and officers and it may well be that he will be able to attend, if invited of course, meetings of the Education Scrutiny Committee; this would afford an opportunity for members to be kept fully abreast of how Oxfordshire children in academies are doing. The Regional Schools Commissioner role includes approving sponsors for new schools, and with so many planned for Oxfordshire over the coming years, we are looking forward to a close and productive relationship with this key representative of the Secretary of State for Education.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I would like to thank Councillor Tilly for her reply Can I ask her as the educational system is now totally fragmented and centrally controlled, do you think that this is in the best interests for children and communities in Oxfordshire?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I was under the impression that the Academies system was started by a Labour government not us.</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>What plans does the County Council have for a valuable piece of open land in Oxford that lies between Donnington recreation ground, Maywood Road and Meadow Lane? The land was playing fields for the former St Augustine's School but is not required by the new St Gregory the Great School.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS & CUSTOMER SERVICES</p> <p>We are reviewing whether we have any operational use for the land. If we no longer need it, an option will be to add the site to a review of the Local Plan to enable it to be allocated for residential development.</p> <p>The site has been put forward to the City Council for consideration in respect of Oxford's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The City Council aims to publish a report in early August which will assess the suitability and deliverability of all the sites put forward, including this site which is referred to as land</p>

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	<p>adjoining Iffley Mead.</p> <p>However, the City Council has also confirmed that there are no plans to review the Sites and Housing Plan as a result of this report and therefore any allocation for residential development is likely to be some time in the future.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would it not be in the County Council's best interest given the constraint on financial circumstances to proceed faster with deciding what do to with this valuable site?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>No.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Will the Council reconsider its advice to the independent panel on providing a special allowance to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee, given that the workload of that committee is so very light? The first two Planning Committees of the municipal year have had only substantial item each.</p>	<p>COUCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The reason we have an Independent Remuneration Panel is that they can take an independent look at the work involved in all the positions and make recommendations. There will be a full review by them during the Autumn and all councillors will be able to make representations I suggest that Cllr Tanner makes his comments direct to them. They will then determine if a SRA is appropriate. Perhaps Cllr Tanners next suggestion will be to reinstate SRAs for opposition spokesman?</p> <p>Once councillors try to vary the Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations it could be a dangerous precedent with councillors perceived to be acting in self-interest.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Can the Leader please justify for us why this special payment is made to this one vice-chair, when a few years ago we got rid of all payments to vice-chairs</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>It is up to the Independent Remuneration Panel to determine. They make the recommendations based on what is put forward, and I'm sure that Councillor Tanner will put forward his thoughts to the Panel and they can take those into consideration and come out with a report. But ultimately we have got to be very careful that we go with the independent report to make sure that we can't be seen to be in self-interest.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Will the Cabinet member explain why the road works at the Kennington and Hinksey Hill roundabouts are a year behind schedule and already 40% over budget? Could he also say why the bus lane from the A34 will not be built until sometime into 2015?</p>	<p>The original programme was to commence work on Kennington and Hinksey in September 2012. However, the scheme had to be reprogrammed due to a late requirement from Thames Water to divert their mains water supply, resulting in an 18 month delay.</p> <p>Our original agreement with Thames Water was that the mains pipe could be left in place and the Council had prepared a design to accommodate this. The late change from Thames Water necessitated a change in design and a re-programme of the construction phase. Thames Water therefore commenced the work to divert their pipe in January 2014. The planned completion date in April was further delayed until June, preventing the main highway works from starting in May 2014. However, we have liaised closely with Thames Water throughout to ensure a seamless handover and we aim to complete the works in November as planned, by accelerating our programme.</p> <p>The increase in costs is therefore partly due to the unbudgeted Thames Water works, but are primarily due to the fact that we have combined works under one contract for delivery. Within the medium term capital programme there were schemes to refurbish the four bridges between Hinksey Hill and Heyford Hill Roundabouts. As part of letting the package of works this has been included within the roundabout scheme to ensure that we are able to minimise the impact on drivers by implementing the schemes at the same time and achieve a saving in the total overall cost of the combined schemes. The budget increase therefore includes a contribution for the costs of these additional schemes.</p> <p>Turning now to the issue of the bus lane from A34, this scheme has only recently been awarded funding to proceed, through the City Deal bid. The scheme currently only has an outline concept design and therefore requires to be fully developed, consulted upon and fully approved with the Highways Agency. This is likely to take in the order of 18 months to get full approval and before construction can finally take place. Once completed however, together with the work currently being undertaken at Kennington and Hinksey, it will provide a significant improvement to the travelling public along this strategically important part of the ring road.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would he look again at this further 18 month delay before we get a bus interchange?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I will certainly have a look at it.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Many car drivers try to do their bit to reduce congestion and pollution by leaving their cars at home where possible and by cycling instead. Would the Cabinet member agree that we need to make the actual roads safer in order to encourage cycling and not simply take the easy way out by designing schemes which put cyclists on the pavements? Apart from anything else this has the unfortunate side-effect of encouraging some anti-social people to cycle on other pavements as well?</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Improving road safety is an objective we all share. Cycle safety schemes include both those where cyclists continue to use the carriageway (as is the case with the major improvement planned for The Plain roundabout in Oxford) and those where cyclists are segregated from general traffic, typically through the provision of shared use cycle tracks. We will continue to identify and implement (subject to funding and consultation) measures to improve road safety for all road users, including cyclists, with their design reflecting local circumstances and constraints. Where we have introduced shared use cycle tracks, we are not aware of this leading to greater illegal use by cyclists of other footways nearby.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>What is his view of the plan to change this junction between Hythe Bridge Street, Worcester Street and George Street by putting in traffic lights and by putting cyclist on lots of small bits of footway at the new junctions?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>That area hasn't been fully designed yet and it will be taken into account in due course.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>14. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Oxford's major cycling organisation, Cyclox, is deeply unhappy with the proposals for the Plain, where over £1m is to be spent, supposedly to make cycling safer. Please can the Cabinet member tell me what account is being taken of their concerns?"</p>	<p>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Officers have spent a great deal of time discussing proposals for The Plain roundabout with cycling groups. We are very grateful for all the comments and suggestions we have received and of course officers have listened very carefully to how they might make the scheme as attractive as possible to cyclists.</p> <p>Whilst I am naturally sorry that Cyclox feel so strongly about the latest design, I am bound to say that we have to balance the needs of all road users here just like other key junctions on our transport network. Even if we were able to make all the changes that have been suggested, other road users would certainly lose out – in this case huge numbers of bus passengers would face considerable delays if we made traffic go even slower than we are already proposing. In any case, we still feel that we will be delivering a scheme that will make things considerably more attractive to cyclists at The Plain than is the case now.</p> <p>For the record, the scheme is estimated to cost £965,000 with £835,000 of that coming from Department for Transport and £135,000 coming from locally held county and city council funds.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Since a lot of cyclists are unhappy about the proposals, are there other ideas that we could come up with to make cycling safer at this very important roundabout? For instance, different colours, different surfaces, slower speeds, working with the Police to enforce the existing 20mph speed limit which is very rarely observed at The Plain and that is why cyclist often dread using that stretch of the road.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Work on the Plain is scheduled to start in October this year. The work on The Plain is actually going to be a compromise between cycling people and the bus companies because there are actually more people coming through on buses than come through on cycles, so it is a question of actually trying to make sure that the buses can still run through there without too much impact on their timetabling.</p>