

County Council

1 July 2014

Schedule of Business

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – 01 JULY 2014

SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

10.00 am - Jim Leivers, Director for Children's Services, will provide a presentation on the Report of the Ofsted Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers prior to the formal part of the meeting where the Report itself is a formal agenda item and Members will have an opportunity of discussing the contents and implications of the Report.

All Councillors are requested to attend the Council Chamber at 10am as usual for the presentation and the formal meeting will start at 10.30am.

Council is scheduled to continue until 4.00 pm.

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AGENDA ITEM	PAGE NO.	MAXIMUM DURATION	APPROX START TIME TIME LIMIT PER DEBATE	SUBJECT	PROPOSALS (M = Motion; SEC = Seconder; Am = Amendment S = Statement; Q = Question; REC = Recommendation to be determined)
1.	1	30 mins	10:30	Apologies	Cllr Dhesi
2.	1			Declarations of Interest	

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3.	2			<p>Minutes</p> <p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 May 2014 (CC1).</p> <p>Members are asked to note the following correction to the Minutes:</p> <p>Minute 26/14, last paragraph ...Council Castle Site and at...</p>	
4.	2			<p>Official Communications</p> <p>The Chairman reports as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfordshire Honours • Kingfisher Award • Investor In People Accreditation • Ofsted Result 	
5.	2			<p>Appointments</p>	<p>(M) Hudspeth (SEC) Rose S Tanner</p>

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6.	2			Petitions and Public Address	<p>Petition</p> <p>Mr Graham Paul Smith, National Councillor, CTC (Cyclists Touring Club), regarding the current design for The Plain, Oxford.</p> <p>Public Address</p> <p>Ms Al Chisholm, Fossil Free Oxfordshire divestment campaign, in support of Agenda Item 18 (Motion From Councillor Williams)</p>
7.	2			Questions with Notice from Members of the Public	None.

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8.	2	30 mins	10.50	Questions with Notice from Members of the Council (1) Mathew to Hudspeth (2) Williams to Tilley (3) Williams to Nimmo Smith (4) Coates to Nimmo Smith (5) Coates to Nimmo Smith (6) Coates to Rose (7) Williams to Fatemian (8) Bartholomew to Hudspeth (9) G Sanders to Tilley (10) Tanner to Carter (11) Tanner to Hudspeth (12) Tanner to Nimmo Smith (13) Pressel to Nimmo Smith (14) Pressel to Nimmo Smith	- See Annex 2

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9.	2	45 mins	11.20	Ofsted Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers	(M) Tilley (SEC) Hudspeth S Brighthouse S Patrick S Williams S Waine S Hoare S Chapman S Owen S Godden S G Sanders S V Smith S Lygo S Christie

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10.	3	25 mins	12.05	Report of the Cabinet Leader (Hudspeth) Deputy Leader (Rose) Adult Social Care (Heathcoat) Children, Education & Families (Tilley) Environment (Nimmo Smith) Finance (Fatemian) Fire Service & Corporate Plan (Chapman)	Q. Patrick (2) Q. Williams, Howson, Christie (4), Fawcett, Hards, Pressel (6) Q. Price, Pressel (8), Hannaby (9) Q. Godden (10) Q. Fulljames, J Sanders (11) Q. Pressel (12), Hards (13) Q. Pressel, Tanner, Beal (14)
11.	3	30 mins	12.30	Military Liaison Annual Report 2013-14	(M) Hudspeth (SEC) S Carter S Greene S Handley S Lovatt S Howson S J Sanders

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12.	4	20 mins	2.00	County Council Meeting Dates	(M) Purse (SEC) V Smith (AM) Pressel (see Annex 1) (SEC) Price S Williams S Fawcett
13.	4	10 mins	2.20	Virements to Council	(M) Fatemian (SEC) Hudspeth S Hards
14.	4	30 mins	2.30	Motion From Councillor Bob Johnston	(M) Johnston (SEC) Howson (AM) Williams (see Annex 1) (SEC) Coates S Hudspeth S Nimmo Smith S Fooks S Fawcett S Patrick S J Sanders

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15.	5	5 mins	3.00	Motion From Councillor John Sanders	(M) J Sanders (SEC) Hudspeth S Johnston S Brighthouse S Hards S Tanner
16.	5			Motion From Councillor Pete Handley	WITHDRAWN
17.	5	20 mins	3.05	Motion From Councillor John Sanders	(M) J Sanders (SEC) Price (AM) Hoare (see Annex 1) (SEC) Langridge S Chapman S Mathew
18.	5	15 mins	3.25	Motion From Councillor David Williams <i>Members are reminded of the Public address at Item 6.</i>	(M) Williams (SEC) Coates S Lilly S Hards S Tanner

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19.	6	20 mins	3.40	Motion From Councillor David Williams	(M) Williams (SEC) Coates (AM) Grey (see Annex 1) (SEC) S Bartholomew S Handley S Hoare S Mallon S Pressel S Lygo S Hards S Beal
20.	6	15 mins		Motion From Councillor David Williams	(M) Williams (SEC) Coates S Johnston S Fooks S Hannaby S Pressel S J Sanders S Rose

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AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS ON NOTICE**Agenda Item 12 – County Council Meeting Dates – Amendment to be moved by Councillor Susanna Pressel**

Council is RECOMMENDED to agree:

- (a) *the changes to the dates of Cabinet and Council meetings in January and February 2015 and going forward to reflect the changed budget process;*
- (b) *the schedule of meeting dates for the 2015/16 Council Year and in particular:*
 - (i) *to waive Rule 2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules to allow the 2015 April Council meeting to be held on 14 April;*
 - ~~(ii) *that from 2016 the November and December Council meetings be replaced by a single meeting to be held in the last week in November;*~~
 - (iii) *that Rule 2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules be amended to reflect the changes agreed above.*

Agenda Item 14 – Motion From Councillor Bob Johnston – Amendment to be moved by Councillor David Williams

“Transport connectivity which is vital for Oxfordshire’s economic future is now at crisis point. We do have outline proposals for a new transport plan. However much of it is too car focused. The tram-train is an innovative way of tackling some of the County’s problems, which would be as effective as individual car use and would be more environmentally friendly.

The tram-train is a hybrid vehicle which can use both the traditional heavy rail and dedicated light rail tracks. The advantage of this system to Oxfordshire is that it can use existing city centre heavy rail facilities with usually only minimal alterations, and on to which light rail tracks can be added where no heavy rail lines exist. Lines could run out to Witney, Kidlington and Horspath. Tram-trains can run on roads where required, with appropriate signalling. Such systems are very popular on the continent ~~Karlsruhe is a good example and they are to be trialled in the UK along the Sheffield to Rotherham corridor.~~ **where an underground section is part of the system to protect historic city centres from surface congestion.**

Council therefore calls for a report to go to Cabinet which scopes and costs the project in outline and also to identify potential sources of finance. Such as project could potentially form a part of Network Rails Control Period 5 investment programme which runs from 2014 to 2019.”

Agenda Item 17 – Motion From Councillor John Sanders – Amendment to be moved by Councillor Simon Hoare

“This Council welcomes the decision by Cabinet to go ahead with implementing the project to ease traffic on the A40 at Shores Green, Witney, as recommended by the independent planning inspector and the Conservative Secretary of State for Transport. ***It welcomes the 4 phased approach to the Witney Transport issues that is being implemented*** It now urges that the project be implemented without delay in order to ease chronic traffic congestion in the area.”

Agenda Item 19 – Motion From Councillor David Williams - Amendment to be moved by Councillor Mark Grey

“This Council is concerned at the level of bee colony collapse in the UK and Oxfordshire with a 60% decline over the last 10 Years and the threat to our food supply as bees provide over 80% of crop pollination. With this in view and taking into account the Council’s responsibilities for conserving biodiversity, this Council calls on the Secretary of State for the Environment to extend his recent moratorium on the use of neonicotinoids to an outright ban.

The Council therefore asks Cabinet to:

- (i) ~~launch a programme that would~~ Seek to support and protect bees focused on establishing bee colonies in its green spaces and wild areas with bee friendly plants;
- (ii) ~~establish and fund a ‘Bee Friendly Wildlife Group’ of officers charged with promoting bee keeping in Oxfordshire.~~ ***Empower officers to co-ordinate interest groups and other third parties to seek external funding to develop bee related projects and to establish a unified response to this issue;***
- (iii) encourage the use of bee hives on municipal land and in the gardens of volunteers and encourage forms of gardening and land use that support pollinating insects. ~~The team should also visit~~ ***Encourage*** schools to educate children about the relationship between bees and biodiversity and the problems surrounding bee mortality;
- (iv) ~~ask the Bee Friendly Wildlife Group to commit resources to mapping Bee lines (1)~~ ***Request officers to consider ways in which they can advise local farmers on their crop planting operations*** and to act in an advisory agent to local farmers on their crop planting operations. ~~The County could also join with~~ ***commend*** Berkshire and Buckinghamshire and Oxon Wildlife Trust in their Friendly Gardening Awards scheme which includes the category of a ‘nectar bar’ (2).”

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QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

ANNEX 2

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 21st 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 21st April 2014.</p>

Questions	Answers
<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.</p> <p>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>

Questions	Answers
<p data-bbox="203 220 741 248">4. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p data-bbox="203 355 846 659">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 data-bbox="203 687 835 794">Would the portfolio holder provide a date when the long suffering people of Oxford will see these two stretched of road resurfaced?</p>	<p data-bbox="880 220 1989 284">COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p data-bbox="880 331 1989 802">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 data-bbox="880 850 1989 1361">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>

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>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-</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>

Questions	Answers
<p>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>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>

Questions	Answers
<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 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>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</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>is referred to as land adjoining Iffley Mead. 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>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>12. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <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>COUCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</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-</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>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>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Many car drivers try to do their bit to reduce congestion and pollution by leaving their cars</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</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>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>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>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>

