

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the County Council held at County Hall on Tuesday 8 September 2009 commencing at 10.00 am, adjourning at 12.10 pm, reconvening at 2 pm and finishing at 4.59 pm

Present:

Councillor TONY CRABBE – in the chair

Councillors:

Alyas Ahmed	Timothy Hallchurch MBE	David Robertson
M Altaf-Khan	Jenny Hannaby	Rodney Rose
Alan Armitage	Steve Hayward	John Sanders
Lynda Atkins	Mrs J Heathcoat	Larry Sanders
Marilyn Badcock	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Don Seale
Michael Badcock	Ian Hudspeth	Bill Service
Roger Belson	Ray Jelf	Dave Sexon
Maurice Billington	Peter Jones	Chip Sherwood
Norman Bolster	Stewart Lilly	C H Shouler
Ann Bonner	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Peter Skolar
Liz Brighthouse	Sandy Lovatt	Roz Smith
Iain Brown	Sajjad Hussain Malik	Val Smith
Nick Carter	Kieron Mallon	Richard Stevens
Louise Chapman	Charles Mathew	John Tanner
Jim Couchman	Keith R Mitchell CBE	Alan Thompson
Roy Darke	David Nimmo-Smith	Melinda Tilley
Arash Fatemian	Neil Owen	David Turner
Jean Fooks	Zoé Patrick	Nicholas P Turner
Anthony Gearing	Susanna Pressel	Carol Viney
Michael Gibbard	Anne Purse	Michael Waine
Patrick Greene	G A Reynolds	David Wilmshurst

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

64/09 ORDER OF BUSINESS

Council agreed to vary the order of business so that Item 13 would be taken before Item 12.

65/09 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

(Agenda Item 1)

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 25 August 2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

66/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Fitzgerald O'Connor, Mrs Fulljames, Goddard, Godden, Handley, Harbour, Harvey, Hutchinson, Stratford and Strangwood.

67/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item 3)

The following declarations of interest were made:

Member	Item	Nature
N Turner	19 (Motion from Councillor L Sanders)	Personal - member of the Governing Board, United Learning Trust
Mitchell	8(b) (Report on Partnership Working in Oxfordshire)	Personal - Chairman of the LGA Selector Panel

68/09 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

Anna Thorne addressed Council opposing the proposal to close Oxford School and to create an Academy (taken with Item 15).

69/09 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question from Mr Robin Draper

“5 months ago at its meeting on 7th April, I asked that the Executive Member for Sustainable Development commission a review of all the alternatives, before the Council made a decision on whether to go ahead with the incinerator proposals. Subsequently this was supported by several MPs and reflects the wish of many of the over 20,000 people who have signed petitions against the incinerator proposals and the objections of 4 district level and 30 parish councils. This was done particularly to give the incoming Council the chance to revisit the policy.

At the time the Chairman assured me that a full reply would be forthcoming shortly, copy to all the Council members. Subsequent events, such as the almost unprecedented Extraordinary Meeting of the Cabinet yesterday, showed that this question was not only being ignored, and with it the views of a large number of local people, but the Council had not been given the courtesy of a reply on which to form its collective views on the matter, prior to yesterday's extraordinary event.

Will the Chairman of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee undertake to review with his committee, the approach taken to the decision to neglect to answer this question, in breach of the principle of fairness in decision making, who was involved in that decision and bring that and the answer to the Council before its next meeting."

Answer from Councillor Patrick Greene, Chairman of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

"Thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of the County Council and, in particular, to me as Chairman of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee. I have checked the record of the County Council meeting on 7 April and see that you did ask a supplementary question about reviewing residual waste treatment options.

Your question was asked of the then Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development and, while I have no record of an answer being provided, I cannot say definitively that an answer was not provided.

Nevertheless, I am happy to provide an answer to you. Some time ago, in 2005, the then Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee carried out an investigation into residual waste treatment options. I was personally involved in this work and the production of a full and detailed report. That report is freely available on the County Council's website. That report ultimately concluded that combined heat and power was the most sustainable option for Oxfordshire. This report was placed before Cabinet which resolved to consider Combined Heat and Power as one of the most environmentally and economically sustainable options of those considered in this Review, for the future disposal of Oxfordshire's waste. However, for the procurement of residual waste treatment, a technology-neutral stance was adopted to give the market the best opportunity of bringing forward the best solution for Oxfordshire. The procurement has been a detailed and thorough piece of work and the final tenders received both utilised energy-from-waste technology, which is enabled to deliver combined heat and power.

Therefore, in answer to your question to me as Chairman of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee, I see no reason why another technology review should be carried out again."

Supplementary Question from Mr Draper

"I am staggered that you cannot say definitely no reply has been sent to councillors. At yesterday's extraordinary Cabinet meeting, 20,000

petitioners, 4 district level councils and various parish councils were obviously disregarded. Will the Chairman of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee review the processes (including the Leader of the Council's approach) leading up to the decision made at the meeting of the Cabinet on 7 September and the public consultation of the whole of the waste disposal exercise with a view to establishing whether the Council's approach can be judged as fair and whether they had sufficiently met the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee's recommendation of 13 July 2005 that "public engagement and approval are fostered" A scrutiny review should be undertaken."

Supplementary Answer from Councillor Greene

"I agree to consult with the Deputy Chairman of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on your request whether to undertake a review of the processes leading up to the decision made at the meeting on 7 September."

70/09 REPORTS OF THE CABINET

(Agenda Item 8)

The Council had before them the:

- (a) report of the Cabinet meetings on 21 April, 26 May, 23 June and 21 July 2009 (CC8(a));
- (b) report on Partnership Working in Oxfordshire (CC8(b)).

(a) Report of the Cabinet

On Paragraph 3 (Questions from Councillors Hannaby and Pressel), Councillor Mitchell undertook to write to all members advising them of the cost of the Annual Report and the 'Inside' magazine.

On Paragraph 22 (Question from Councillor V Smith), Councillor Chapman agreed to raise at the Corporate Parenting Panel whether there should be more reports to Council on corporate parenting.

(b) Report on Partnership Working in Oxfordshire

Council was advised that the dates for future meetings of the partnerships should read as follows:

Name of Partnership	Future meeting
Oxfordshire Partnership	25 November 2009
Oxfordshire Public Service Board	18 November 2009
Oxfordshire Children's and Young People's Trust	18 September 2009
Health and Wellbeing Partnership	17 September 2009
Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership	8 September 2009
Oxfordshire Waste Partnership	23 October 2009

Oxfordshire Environment Partnership	23 October 2009
Oxfordshire Economic Partnership	20 October 2009
Oxfordshire Voluntary Sector Development Partnership	14 October 2009
Oxfordshire Learning and Skills Partnership	17 September 2009
District Local Strategic Partnerships:	
Cherwell Partnership	5 October 2009
Oxford Strategic Partnership	15 October 2009
South Oxfordshire Partnership	21 October 2009
Vale Strategic Partnership	3 December 2009
West Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership	26 November 2009

On the report of the Environment Partnership, Councillor Mitchell agreed to advise Councillor Purse whether there was a sub-group of the Environment Partnership on climate change.

71/09 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Agenda Item 9)

The Council had before them the Annual Report of the Standards Committee (CC9). It was advised that Ann Griffiths had been appointed as the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee at its meeting on 24 July 2009. In the absence of the former Chairman (Mr Elmore) due to ill health, she attended the meeting to present the Annual Report which summarised the work of the Committee over the last year.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Michael Badcock and seconded by Councillor Patrick) to receive the report and to ask the Chairman to write to Mr Elmore to thank him for his hard work on the Committee and to wish him well.

72/09 ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT III

(Agenda Item 10)

The Council had before them the Annual Report by the Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire (CC10).

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Couchman) to receive the report and to note in particular the general recommendations in the report.

73/09 COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2010/11

(Agenda Item 11)

The Council had before them the report (CC11) of the Assistant Head of Legal & Democratic Services containing the schedule of meeting dates proposed for the 2010/11 Council year. Directors and Political Groups had been consulted on a draft schedule. The schedule had been drawn up to reflect the various rules about frequency of meetings set out in the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED: (on a motion by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Robertson) to approve the proposed dates of meetings for 2010/11 as set out in CC11.

74/09 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL
(Agenda Item 13)

20 questions with notice were asked. Details of the questions and answers and the supplementary questions and answers, where asked and given, are set out in the Annex to the Minutes.

75/09 THEMED DEBATE – SERVICES AND RESOURCE PLANNING
2010/11 - 2014/15
(Agenda Item 12)

The Council had before them a report by Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive - Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer (CC12).

Councillor Shouler moved and Councillor Mitchell seconded the recommendation as amended (shown in italic type and by strikethrough):

- (a) to note the report;
- (b) to *forward the report for provide* advice to Cabinet on the development of the Financial Strategy.

During the debate, the following issues were raised:

Review expenditure of Council publications and staffing levels in Media & Communications;
Review use of agency staff, interims and consultants;
Share premises with partners (including better use of schools buildings and co-location (e.g. joint civic offices);
Identify need, resources and then options;
More efficient use of energy;
Reduce number of employees and overall expenditure;
Identify first most vital services and how to maintain them before considering how to maintain other services;
Loss of 500 County Council jobs will not help local economy;
Review free parking at park and ride car parks;
Reduce statistics collected for the government;
Show cost of reducing level of Council Tax;
Learn lessons from others (e.g. Essex Police) and review costs of all expenditure and proposed reductions in expenditure;
Reduce Council hospitality at meetings;
Ask employees for suggestions on where savings can be made;
Review employee travel expenditure (as consequence of locality working);
Consider whether the “Shared Services” model can be extended and

whether some services can be shared with other local authorities (including joint management arrangements).

RESOLVED: (by 42 votes to 0) to:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) forward the report for advice to Cabinet on the development of the Financial Strategy.

76/09 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JEAN FOOKS
(Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Fooks moved and Councillor Armitage seconded the following motion:

“This Council is fully aware of the effects of the current national economic situation, in particular pressures on Oxfordshire due to the high number of public service employees. Council also notes the projected high unemployment among young people, and that at a time of recession, vulnerable people are more than ever in need of our services.

Council recognises that this means that every pound spent by Oxfordshire County Council and its partners must “punch above its weight”.

Council resolves to

- (i) Encourage young people to stay in education by working with schools, FE colleges and local universities to provide imaginative and useful courses offering qualifications to help them when they enter the workplace, including valuable work experience;
- (ii) Through the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership seek to maximise any initiatives in which the County can, alone or with its partners, provide jobs and spark the economic recovery. Jobs which help to minimize the effects of climate change and form the basis of recovery, such as jobs in sustainable tourism, should be the priority;
- (iii) Make every effort to protect the services we provide to all our vulnerable people, including people with disabilities and mental health problems;
- (iv) When vacancies occur wherever possible fill those posts with permanent employees rather than agency staff;
- (v) Work collaboratively across political parties on the Council to ensure we all share an active role in helping to identify cost savings in the budget process, which includes ensuring that the impacts of any proposed savings are clearly understood.”

Councillor Mitchell moved and Councillor Robertson seconded the following amendment to the motion (shown in italic type and by strikethrough):

~~“This Council is fully aware of the effects of the current national economic situation, in particular pressures on Oxfordshire due to the high number of public service employees. Council also notes the projected high unemployment among young people, and that at a time of recession, vulnerable people are more than ever in need of our services.”~~

~~Council recognises that this means that every pound spent by Oxfordshire County Council and its partners must “punch above its weight”.~~

Council resolves to

This Council acknowledges that the current Conservative Administration is working in a wide variety of ways to help deal with the current national economic situation. These include the following:

- (i) ~~We ~~E~~ncourage~~ young people to stay in education by working with schools, FE colleges and local universities to provide imaginative and useful courses offering qualifications to help them when they enter the workplace, including valuable work experience;
- (ii) *Work in partnership with* ~~Through~~ the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership ~~seeking seek~~ to maximise any initiatives in which the County can, alone or with its partners ~~that~~ provide jobs and to help spark the economic recovery. ~~Jobs and which help~~ to minimise the effects of climate change and ~~create~~ the basis for ~~of~~ recovery such as jobs in sustainable tourism;
- (iii) *This Conservative administration is* ~~M~~making every effort to protect ~~the services we provide to~~ for all residents across Oxfordshire, ~~including including~~ people with disabilities and mental health problems ~~vulnerable people and to look after the interests of Council tax payers;~~
- (iv) *We continue the existing process to look at the best and most cost effective solution to fill vacant posts.* ~~When vacancies occur wherever possible fill those posts with permanent employees rather than agency staff;~~
- (v) *We continue to share an active role with all members, including through Scrutiny committees,* ~~Work collaboratively across political parties on the Council to ensure we all share an active role in helping to identify cost savings in the budget process, which includes and to ensureing that the impacts of any proposed savings are clearly understood~~ *by all concerned.”*

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote and carried by 45 votes to 17.

RESOLVED: (by 45 votes to 0) as follows:

“This Council acknowledges that the current Conservative Administration is working in a wide variety of ways to help deal with the current national economic situation. These include the following:

- (i) We encourage young people to stay in education by working with schools, FE colleges and local universities to provide imaginative and useful courses offering qualifications to help them when they enter the workplace, including valuable work experience;
- (ii) Work in partnership with the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership seeking to maximise initiatives that provide jobs to help spark the economic recovery and which minimise the effects of climate change and create the basis for recovery such as jobs in sustainable tourism;
- (iii) This Conservative administration is making every effort to protect services for all residents across Oxfordshire including vulnerable people and to look after the interests of Council tax payers;
- (iv) We continue the existing process to look at the best and most cost effective solution to fill vacant posts;
- (v) We continue to share an active role with all members, including through Scrutiny committees, to identify cost savings in the budget process and to ensure that the impacts of proposed savings are clearly understood by all concerned.”

77/09 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE
(Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Brighouse moved and Councillor Stevens seconded the following motion:

“This Council, having grave concerns about the proposals about Secondary Education in East Oxford communicated to Councillors, Parents and the Community through the media asks the Cabinet Member for School Improvement to look at all options for the improvement of Education in the area served by Oxford Community School rather than rushing into one option which may not necessarily meet the needs of young people and their parents. It further asks that these options should be the subject of consultation with all parents and young people who are or could be affected.”

Following debate, the motion was lost by 43 votes to 18.

78/09 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR SAJ MALIK
(Agenda Item 16)

Councillor Malik sought Council's consent, which was given, to withdraw his motion as it had now been agreed not to make changes to the structure or location of St Christopher's C.E. Primary School.

79/09 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANNE PURSE
(Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Patrick moved and Councillor R Smith seconded the motion in the following amended form as shown in italic type and by strikethrough:

"Council welcomes the recent report from ATOC (Association of Train Operating Companies) to re-open branch lines, some of which are in Oxfordshire. This would give more people the option of using public transport, thus reducing the traffic congestion on our roads. Rail links would also provide vital infrastructure to possible housing development giving access to jobs and leisure activities with minimal consequent carbon emissions.

~~Council resolves therefore to work together~~ *This Council acknowledges that the current Conservative administration is working with the rail companies, Network Rail and the Department of Transport to ensure we are planning for the future in developing the next Local Transport Plan (LTP3) to include these proposals."*

RESOLVED: (nem con) as follows:

"Council welcomes the recent report from ATOC (Association of Train Operating Companies) to re-open branch lines, some of which are in Oxfordshire. This would give more people the option of using public transport, thus reducing the traffic congestion on our roads. Rail links would also provide vital infrastructure to possible housing development giving access to jobs and leisure activities with minimal consequent carbon emissions.

This Council acknowledges that the current Conservative administration is working with the rail companies, Network Rail and the Department of Transport to ensure we are planning for the future in developing the next Local Transport Plan (LTP3) to include these proposals."

80/09 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LYNDA ATKINS
(Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Atkins moved and Councillor Brown seconded the motion in the following amended form as shown in italic type and by strikethrough:

"This Council recognises the immense contribution made by the members of the Armed Forces based in Oxfordshire who are on deployment in other

~~countries, particularly in areas of conflict. The Council also recognises the burden these deployments place on the families of those soldiers and members of the RAF. In order to demonstrate the Council's support for our local servicemen and their families, this Council will work with each of the major Army and RAF bases in the County to provide hospitality to the families of those on deployment, in a similar way to that for dependents from the Bicester Garrison on 24th August, at a time and in a way appropriate to each Unit. A suitable budget will be identified.~~

This Council applauds the fact that the Conservative Administration has voted £100,000 to support Oxfordshire military personnel and their dependents in each of the financial years 2008/09 and in 2009/10.

This Council also applauds the Chairman's recent initiative in providing hospitality to the Bicester families of those on deployment and asks the current or succeeding Chairmen of the County Council to provide similar activities for families from other military establishments in the County."

RESOLVED: (nem con) as follows:

"This Council recognises the immense contribution made by the members of the Armed Forces based in Oxfordshire who are on deployment in other countries, particularly in areas of conflict. The Council also recognises the burden these deployments place on the families of those soldiers and members of the RAF.

This Council applauds the fact that the Conservative Administration has voted £100,000 to support Oxfordshire military personnel and their dependents in each of the financial years 2008/09 and in 2009/10.

This Council also applauds the Chairman's recent initiative in providing hospitality to the Bicester families of those on deployment and asks the current or succeeding Chairmen of the County Council to provide similar activities for families from other military establishments in the County."

81/09 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS
(Agenda Item 19)

The motion from Councillor L Sanders was considered dropped in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.5.8.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2009

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions	Answers
<p>1. COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER</p> <p>Traditional recruitment media for local authorities include the Guardian, the Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle, along with local newspapers. How much does the Council spend year-on-year on recruitment advertising in general, and on the above publications in particular; and is the Council considering any new strategies for advertising its vacancies?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID ROBERTSON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>For Jan – Dec 2008 the Council spent £444.5k on recruitment advertising (excluding schools recruitment). The amount spent with the Guardian (£4370) the Municipal Journal (£5225) and the LGC (£18340) publications total £27935.</p> <p>This year there is a proactive move to redirect our advertising to web based recruitment, thus reducing the spend on advertising. We will also maximise use of external websites (web sites are usually cheaper than press) and develop a more effective way of sourcing candidates through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising our web recruitment facility to allow talent pooling of applicants. This will have the joint benefit of reducing the timeline (getting people into posts faster) and reducing advertising spend. • Pre-established candidate pool
<p>2. COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY</p> <p><i>A recent nationwide investigation revealed massive spending by local authorities on new staff with titles such as "carbon reduction advisors" and "climate change managers". The Taxpayers'</i></p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>The County Council has not increased spending in this area over the last two years. However, the Head of Sustainable Development has carried out a minor reorganisation within his service to improve focus on carbon reduction, which will be of increasing financial importance to the council over the next few years with the introduction by government of the carbon reduction commitment. This is a cap and trade scheme affecting large organisations in both the public and private sectors; under it, poor performers will be</p>

Questions	Answers
<p><i>Alliance estimates that each local authority now employs an average of eight people to work on a variety of “green” issues. What has been the position at Oxfordshire County Council before and after the launch of its carbon reduction programme?</i></p>	<p>penalised, while those organisations that reduce their carbon emissions most rapidly stand to gain financially.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Whilst I agree with all measures for saving energy and looking after the environment, there is a confusion between carbon and CO₂. CO₂ is not a pollutant, it is a non-toxic, colourless, odourless gas essential to human life. Does the Cabinet not worry about the fact that cutting down CO₂ means cutting down twice as much oxygen as carbon. There are also a large number of scientists who now think we are going into a little cooling of 20-50 years which can in no way be blamed on CO₂ and so I would like to find out whether he agrees with</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Councillor Tilley’s views on climate change and global warming are generally known throughout this Council and I respect different councillors’ views. I am quite happy that she has her own views and the Council has its views.</p>

Questions	Answers
me that all this is quite worrying?	
<p>3. COUNCILLOR IAIN BROWN Each year, Oxfordshire County Council increases its budget for the costs of street lighting. Does the relevant Cabinet member agree that too many street lights remain burning in the county's urban areas and town centres long after people have gone to bed, and that the Council's carbon reduction plan would benefit if many of these lights were switched off at midnight?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE It should be noted that the only annual increases in the Street Lighting budget are to cover inflation costs for energy and the maintenance operation. The following also needs to be taken into consideration: natural growth with new housing developments or proposed future ones, Park & Ride car parks (which Oxfordshire County Council has taken responsibility of from Oxford City Council), Real Time Bus Information implemented by OCC, etc. Electrical Services-Lighting team are in the process of trialling part night lighting with a number of Parish Councils, and have already switched off a number of lights on several classified roads. We will be looking at rolling this out further, in areas of low crime rate, in close partnership with Thames Valley Police. There will need to be a period of consultation as well as investment upfront to cover the cost of equipment to enable the transfer to part-night lighting.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that the rural areas at times lead the way in reducing our carbon footprint by not having street lights at all?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER Yes</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR TONY</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR SHOULER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE & PROPERTY</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>HARBOUR In July, the Audit Commission published a report suggesting that schools could save £400 million a year if they bought desks and equipment more sensibly. Is this the sort of advice that Oxfordshire needs to heed?</p>	<p>The spend by schools on furniture is maintained at school level through their devolved budgets and the choice of who they procure through rests with the school.</p> <p>Schools are already being encouraged to use purchasing consortia deals such as Central Buying Consortia and English Shires Purchasing Organisation that deliver large volume benefits for commodity groups such as desks. We already monitor this through the use of the electronic procurement system that is being increasingly used by schools.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER How much does the Council spend each year on commercially-run conferences for staff – both general events and CPD point-scoring events – and how many days' absence from normal duties is recorded by staff attending such events?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID ROBERTSON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL In 2008/09 the Council spent £633,771 on all conferences. The days' absence for such events are not separately recorded although the total training days for all staff is maintained.</p> <p>The majority of memberships of professional bodies require their members to undergo continuous professional development. In some cases this is managed by awarding points for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) from each event undertaken and these points are summed to ensure adequate levels of training have been received through the year.</p> <p>CPD is an essential means of maintaining standards of professional knowledge and practice after the initial examinations have been completed. The Council's services rely on professionals to deliver services - such as teachers, social workers, engineers and to support these services, accountants, lawyers, HR managers. Oxfordshire demands high standards from these key groups and fully supports CPD as an important means of achieving this.</p> <p>Many events which are billed as conferences but are in substance essential up dates on</p>

Questions	Answers
	best practice, new legislation and benchmarking. They form an essential opportunity for managers to ensure they are up to date with developments.
<p>6. COUNCILLOR STEWART LILLY</p> <p>Direct Mail (in the form of individually addressed advertising messages) accounts for 180,000 tons of waste nationally. If the Council has to dispose of 1,000 tons of junk mail, it is likely to cost the taxpayer around £80,000 a year on landfill. How does the Council encourage residents to use the Mail Preference Service, which stops addressed junk mail and saves the cost of disposing of it?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Reducing the amount of waste produced is a crucial part of the County Council's strategy for sustainable waste management as it is the most environmentally and cost effective way to manage waste. The County Council has dedicated waste reduction officers who promote ways that people can reduce the amount of waste produced at home, at work and within their communities.</p> <p>Waste Management produce waste reduction packs, which are referred to on the "waste" pages of the County Council website, and are available free on 08450 50 45 50 or from roadshows and events. Each pack contains a guide to reducing rubbish, details of the home composting offer, a junk mail solution pack, two envelope reuse stickers and details on where to get information on kerbside recycling collection schemes. These are produced in partnership with the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and also distributed by the District Councils.</p> <p>The waste reduction pack provides information on how to contact the Mail Preference Service (MPS) to reduce the amount of junk mail received. We recognise that junk mail is an unwanted source of waste for many residents within the county and encourage people to contact MPS to stop their unwanted mail which is not only a waste of resources but also costly to dispose of.</p>
<p>7. COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO-SMITH</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The position in Oxfordshire is, broadly, the same as elsewhere in the UK. Since 2005 there</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Concern continues to be expressed about morale among head teachers, and its effect on recruitment and retention. How have this Government's ever-changing education policies and continual obsession with micro-management exacerbated this problem; what has been the effect in turn-over rates among head teachers in Oxfordshire; and how is the Council addressing the situation?</p>	<p>have been about 35 – 40 headteacher appointments a year. The principal issue in relation to headteacher recruitment flows from the age profile of existing heads which results, for a time, in higher numbers of headteachers becoming eligible for retirement. In Oxfordshire the 'bulge' appears to have been spread over more years than in many other authorities which has been helpful. This is likely to remain an issue for another couple of years or so.</p> <p>It must be remembered that many resignations are accounted for by headteachers moving schools more frequently than in the past as part of their career development tending, particularly, to move from smaller to bigger schools.</p> <p>Appointing heads to small primary schools can be difficult and the relatively high number of small primary schools in the county creates an additional pressure. The LA has been successful in securing some government funding which assists with the career development of aspiring headteachers through the 'NPQH' route, and, more generally, has a Leadership Succession Planning Strategy which seeks to build capacity for sustained development in Oxfordshire schools by supporting the identification, growth, recruitment and retention of high quality school leaders at all levels.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I thank Councillor Waine for his answer, but part of my question was about micro-management. In Henley in the last 3 years, two of the primary schools have appointed new Headteachers. There were not many applications. I am told that</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Yes</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>this was partly due to interminable form filling, and statistical returns and paper work required by the heavy handed central government and that teachers would prefer to be motivated by teaching rather than form filling. Does the Cabinet portfolio member agree?</p>	
<p>8. COUNCILLOR ALAN ARMITAGE The Environment Agency has recently revised and republished their "one in one hundred year" flood maps, resulting in several properties and businesses in Oxfordshire being formally assessed as being at higher risk of flooding than before. Does the County Council intend to take any steps to help residents and businesses affected to deal with the consequences, in particular with regard to building and maintaining flood defences, renovating ground floor rooms in order to minimise the effects of flooding, and negotiating</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE The Environment Agency is the only authority who deal with flood defences; the County Council would only get involved if we were asked to, for instance, upsize a gully pot to facilitate pumping over a barrier to relieve flooding, as we have done in Osney Island.</p> <p>Work on individual properties is the responsibility of the property owners. However, the District Councils have received grants from the Government to go towards individual flood defences of properties and the property owner would need to apply directly to the District Council.</p> <p>The insurance industry would only consult the County Council if the flooding of a property had come about due to the existing highway drainage system being directly involved.</p> <p>The main involvement the County Council would have in these newly identified flooding areas would be to make sure that the existing highway drainage system is working as efficiently as possible. We will also be working closely with the other Authorities to lessen the effects of any future flooding.</p>

Questions	Answers
with insurance companies?	
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am somewhat disappointed with the reply here because the fact that 1% are now considered to be in the flood plain has come as a huge shock to a lot of people including most of the residents of Jericho for example not very far from here. The Environment Agency has done a surprising amount, the City Council has and even Thames Water has been quite supportive, but I am afraid the visibility of the County Council has been zero in all</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We are working with City and District Councils. As you know from the Pitt report, that is one of the proposals coming forward, and we have established a working relationship with the City Council and the District Councils. If you read the answer to the question, you can see that the main driver for everything is through the Environment Agency which provides the flood defences. We, as the Highways Authority, when requested by the Environment Agency, do look at highway measures. Again, it is important to remember that drainage is historically being put down to drainage from the highways and not from any other surplus land. So if the City Council puts tarmac everywhere on new building projects, it is only adding to the problem. I would just point out that the County Council's Fire Service did fantastically well during the floods and has always done fantastically well during the floods and everyone does appreciate that service.</p>
<p>of this. I am very disappointed that the rather smug reply here does not seem to imply the fact that County officers do not turn up to meetings anymore, of the Oxford Flood Alliance for example. Does it not seem to have registered that this is actually having an impact on people's perception. I am disappointed in this and could he</p>	

Questions	Answers
give an assurance that this is going to change?	
<p>9. COUNCILLOR JEAN FOOKS</p> <p>There is concern in some departments about the time taken to fill vacancies. What is the minimum time that can be achieved from the decision to fill a vacancy to the post being offered at interview? What are the reasons for a longer time being taken and what plans are in place to minimise the time period?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID ROBERTSON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I am not able to comment on subjective views about timescales to fill vacancies but if the questioner wishes to provide me with specific information about any delays in the process I would be happy to investigate and report back to council.</p> <p>However, in general terms the current target period from the time the post is authorised to recruit to the post offered at interview is 45 calendar days. The recruitment team meet this target in 72% of sample cases. We are working to reduce this time by developing our web recruitment facility that will have the benefit of reducing the timeline and reducing advertising spend.</p> <p>Benchmarking work is being undertaken to compare with other councils but the Chartered Institute for Personnel and development has reported that the average time to recruit to offer stage is 52 calendar days.</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR ALAN ARMITAGE</p> <p>What is the average length of time now taken by the County Council to pay invoices from small and medium sized enterprises?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR SHOULER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE & PROPERTY</p> <p>The average number of days from receipt to payment for SMEs for the first quarter of the financial year 2009/10 was 12.9 days.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I think I am right in saying that the target for paying most bills is within</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The target is 14 days not 10 days and that was the indication given by the Leader when he was saying that the Council would endeavour to pay SME invoices 14 days after receipt.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>10 days. Can the Cabinet Member comment as to whether this is still a target or has been a target or have I misunderstood, and if so when is it likely to be met?</p>	<p>Councillor Armitage has now asked an entirely different question. If he wanted to know what the percentage paid within 14 days was, why did he not ask it in the first question? I have given an answer precisely to the question you have asked. If, Chairman, you are ruling that I actually now have to ask officers to investigate how many are paid within the 14 days, I will do so.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR ZOÉ PATRICK Does the Leader consider that notifying all councillors and staff by an email just minutes before going to the media about the 10% staffing cuts shows good management practice?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL If you are asking whether we handled the very difficult issue of advising two separate audiences of the difficult decisions we face in the light of the national economic and financial position, my answer is an unequivocal YES. If you do not understand what the two separate audiences were – and your question suggests you do not – I need to explain that they were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCC staff and elected members and; • Oxfordshire residents, whose money and services we are talking about here. <p>In my view, these two groups are equally important and deserved as near an equality of treatment as is possible. It was vitally important that both audiences received the information directly and not through the distorting prism of the media or intermixed with party political messages and that they received it almost simultaneously. Unions and party leaders were informed in advance and in confidence, as Councillor Patrick knows. Internally, managers were briefed in advance so as to be able to answer staff questions and staff themselves were told shortly before the information became public. The response from staff on the day and since, evidenced by the numerous comments we have received via the on-line system we set up for their suggestions and views and the response from residents via local websites (which we also contacted in tandem with the media on the day) would indicate that they felt this was the right approach. We have received no complaints at all from staff, unions or residents about the way the news was released.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am pleased that the Leader has acknowledged that he has given advanced warning which was basically one day. In future when decisions like this are made, will we and in particular staff get more advanced warning about such issues?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>No, not if I think they are going to read about them in the Oxford Mail before our staff hear about them from us.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR ALAN ARMITAGE</p> <p>Is the County Council hoping to provide ICT services to other local authorities in Oxfordshire?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ROBERTSON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The County Council already has a contract to provide ICT services to the City Council which commenced on 1st April. They have also recently written to Cherwell District Council offering to present to them a similar option, having heard that Cherwell were considering out sourcing their service in order to save money. We are happy to talk with other Districts, but are not aware of any other plans to out source at present.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I would just like to say to him that is it wise that during the recent County Council elections, Conservative Party candidates should have gone around and written letters to the paper implying that the reason the</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am surprised you were quick to rule against Councillor Shouler and that you accepted that question – I am not prepared to answer it. It is not to do with the question that was asked on the paper.</p> <p>Chairman – I accept that decision.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>County Council has taken over the City Council's IT department is because of incompetence on the part of the City Council which is not true? In any case, the letters have put a few noses out of joint among the department that is now part of the County Council. Does he agree that it is not a good idea to try and bring these kinds of things into party politics?</p>	
<p>13. COUNCILLOR JANET GODDEN</p> <p>The Council has lost much credibility as an open and listening authority by sending to the Department for Children, Schools and Families a draft "Expression of interest" document about the creation of a second Academy in East Oxford without any preliminary consultation with parents and future parents of the schools affected. Why did this happen?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>Any proposal to make a substantial change to school organisation will always be subject to full consultation, usually both formal and informal. The proposal to open an Academy if it proceeds will be subject to such consultation. The matter of when consultation with the wider community should start is often a fine one but in this case it was clear that there was little point in consulting on a proposal which could not proceed or on an Expression of Interest which was still in draft. The DCSF view about the finally submitted Expression of Interest will provide clarity about whether a proposal can proceed and, if so, what proposal can (and will) be consulted on.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>14. COUNCILLOR JEAN FOOKS Cuttleslowe Primary School has been given support to enable it to provide an extra reception class for 30 children for September 2009, but as yet no indication of whether there will be places for these extra children in the following years. It is understandable that parents will not want their children to have to move school after only one year; when will plans be developed to allow a permanent expansion of the school for all years up to Year 6?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT There is sufficient space in Cuttleslowe Primary School to accommodate all those pupils being admitted this September for the rest of their primary schooling. If further capacity is needed as the result of two forms of entry in 2010 and beyond the Council is already committed to providing the necessary accommodation</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>It does not answer the question which is rather the point of the operation, I thought. Yes there are a few more children coming to Cuttleslowe School this term and there will be more through the year but what parent is going to choose a</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>At the time of the discussion with the school, this commitment was given and it was not questioned as a commitment and that commitment lies under the primary review. Another commitment was given by local members at the time actually to look at some of the issues that surround problems that beset Cuttleslowe School in terms of leakage of the pupils to other schools mid year when spaces occur. I think there is a need for more joint working to be done on this but in the end we will be putting in extra accommodation if the needs are there and I think the answer is quite specific.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>school where there is only space for the first year and they are likely to have to move their child the year after. That is not the way to attract children to come to a growing and improving school. I would like to know when we are going to have the consultation so that parents who do choose to send their children to Cutteslowe will know that they will be able to stay for the period of their primary education?</p>	
<p>15. COUNCILLOR JEAN FOOKS Given that Shared Services is expected to fully realise the originally promised savings in 2011, what plans are there for providing further cost savings to the Council, including the potential for sharing back-office services with other authorities and organisations?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ROBERTSON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL The Shared Services Business Plan is focused on repayment of the original investment costs together with an on-going continual repayment of £2.4m (nett) per year once a steady state has been achieved.</p> <p>A continuous improvement plan with defined projects has been developed to achieve an on-going additional 2% saving to further challenge the efficiency process. In the light of the national and international economic situation and the increased efficiency programme required within OCC as a result, further in-house work is in train to identify further cost saving measures. These will be developed in accordance with the Star Chamber process and timeframes</p> <p>The success of Shared Services to date has already attracted a good deal of external interest and several visits have taken place by neighbouring authorities at their request.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>Additionally, the opportunity to visit, learn from and consider active involvement has been offered to other authorities within the county.</p> <p>However our priority is to ensure that the business and process changes brought about as a consequence of the move to Shared Services are firstly being delivered consistently to directorates before progressing anything substantial on an external basis.</p>
<p>16. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>What options, in addition to an Academy, are being considered for raising standards at Oxford School, which stakeholders have been consulted, what extra resources are being put into the school this term and what plans have been made for new school buildings?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>Since Oxford School's designation by government as a National Challenge school and the Local National Challenge Board's rating of it as 'high' risk, the Local Authority (LA) has been obliged to consider a structural solution. The possibility of closure is ruled out because, although numbers are declining, other more successful neighbouring schools do not have sufficient capacity. In the case of Oxford School an Academy is the preferred DCSF option. Stakeholders will be consulted once Minister's have approved the Expression of Interest (EOI) and there is a definitive proposal on which to consult.</p> <p>The National Challenge provides the school with an additional £103K for this school year, and 20 days of support from the National Challenge Adviser. In addition the LA will sustain the level of support that was provided to the school last year: this includes a dedicated Raising Attainment Team (RAT) of secondary consultants who provide support to improve the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management; increased Educational Psychologist and Education Social Work time; and enhanced support from the School Improvement Leader for leadership (including governance).</p> <p>If the EOI is approved, then detailed building proposals will be worked up as part of the subsequent feasibility study.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would Councillor Waine accept my congratulations on his change of view on St Christopher's School which is now going to be kept open and not forced into an academy? Would he agree with me that by the time we get a definitive proposal and formal consultation about an academy that the decision has already been made and it is far too late? What is actually needed is some real discussions now with parents, teachers and children about the future of a school which has improved its examinations results quite remarkably just the other day and will he agree that rather than rushing to an academy as the absolute essential choice he should look at a number of choices and spend some of the Better Schools for the Future money in improving the school and not thrusting into the arms of the United Learning Trust and only looking at</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Thank you. I have not made up my mind on St Christopher's, as I said all along. I have an open mind on proposals that were being considered. I said I would listen to parents and look at the facts and that is what I did and that is where the letter came from. With regard to Oxford School, the school is a national challenge school and we must remind ourselves that, as such, this is probably the highest priority Government programme of all, or it was when it was set up. Whether it is at this point in time I am not altogether clear but they are still putting in the resources. But as such it was Oxfordshire's only national challenge school and by being a national challenge school the spotlight was put on it nationally for what were seen as inherent problems in terms of low achievement and low attainment. Of course we have looked at other alternatives. When we looked at Peers School we did have conversations with the Governing Body of Oxford School to see if we could look at issues that both schools had. So we are moving ahead with an expression of interest which has gone in and when the Government responds to that expression of interest we will consult very fully with the School and its community and our aim will be to consult on the same model as we used at Drayton School when Drayton School moved to the North Oxfordshire Academy because it did in fact meet the needs of all stakeholders.</p>

Questions	Answers
that as the only option?	
<p>17. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member agree that to persuade people out of their cars we must make walking and cycling more attractive? Does he agree with me that the proposed Controlled Parking Zones for East Oxford, particularly by forcing parking on pavements, will actually make it more difficult for pedestrians and cyclists and so perversely promote car use?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>I agree that making alternative forms of transport more attractive, including walking and cycling, is an important factor in reducing the use of the private car. The Divinity and Magdalen Road areas include many streets where conditions for pedestrians in particular would be significantly improved by the proposed Controlled Parking Zones. Whereas many cars currently park on the footway leaving less than 1m for pedestrians (which would not allow a wheelchair to pass), under the proposals parking bays would allow 1.2m or more, except at pinch points or for short stretches. This would allow wheelchairs to pass, but it is not ideal and does not create complete freedom of movement for all users. However, we are working with an existing situation, with narrow streets and footways, dense housing, and very little off-street parking.</p> <p>This item is coming to Transport Decisions Committee on 1 October 2009 and it will be for us on that Committee to determine whether the situation you describe is acceptable or not. I would not like to prejudge this process.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am a bit stunned by that answer; no consultation but still creating Controlled Parking Zones. Would Councillor Hudspeth agree with me that if there is going to be 1.2m on pavements except at pinch points</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>First of all, I would just like to say that I am very pleased that Councillor Tanner agrees that Controlled Parking Zones are a good thing because that it is a very important statement that he made that night. Unfortunately, he omitted to say how it was funded and how the City Council used to operate Controlled Parking Zones but was not able to do so and we now have that responsibility. If you go around that area, there are some cars parked all over the pavements in a very poor way which does affect wheelchair users and pedestrians</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>for short stretches that this is going to cause considerable difficulty for people with pushchairs and people who are wheelchair users and that would he agree with me that a lot could be done by simply getting the police to take action against obstructions on the pavements and by putting double yellow lines at corners. Would he assure me that the heavy lobbying by the Fire Service to create wide boulevards down the centre of these tiny East Oxford roads so that cars are forced onto the pavements and pedestrians and cyclists crawl along the walls at their peril that he will not listen to that lobbying?</p>	<p>walking up and down. It is very bad at the moment. The proposal put forward is one of the proposals because I cannot prejudge what may be decided on 1 October. It is to regularise and to make sure that there is sufficient width across the area to enable pushchairs to pass but only on one side of the road; on the other side of the road it would be clear. As regards the heavy lobbying by the Fire Service, I am sorry I have had no heavy lobbying by the Fire Service; it is quite simply a question we put to the Fire Service - is there sufficient room? As I explained at that meeting it is all very well for a Firefighter to be driving through some traffic very slowly during the day, but if you ring 999 and want the Fire Service there quickly, you want them there as soon as possible rather than having to drive down the road very slowly which is what it would mean. We take on both views. There was some considerable debate as to whether we should have smaller fire engines. It was explained that smaller fire engines could not be limited just to Oxford but would have to be across Oxfordshire. It goes back to the point, if you want a good fire service that it is going to be right there when you are ringing 999 you have to listen to the professionals. As far as I am concerned, I have received no lobbying from anybody in the Fire Service nor from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for that. But I have asked the question and they have given a reply.</p>
<p>18. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER Does the Cabinet Member agree an energy from waste plant, or incinerator, in Oxfordshire may well not be the best alternative to sending rubbish to landfill? Will he agree to investigate Mechanical</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE Alternative ways of treating municipal waste including energy from waste (EfW), mechanical biological treatment (MBT) and advanced thermal treatment (ATT) were investigated in the options appraisal that was carried out in 2006. This found that there are a number of treatment technologies that could offer a solution for Oxfordshire. This work informed the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Oxfordshire which states “Our policy is to use treatment technologies that recover value to reduce our reliance on landfill</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Biological Treatment, Anaerobic Digestion, and Pyrolysis as alternatives, which may be better for public health and the environment, as well as more cost effective in the long run for the taxpayer?</p>	<p>and meet our LATS targets. Whatever we choose must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be safe for the environment and human health; • Recover value from the waste; • Not be a substitute for reuse, recycling and composting.” <p>This work also informed the preparation of the outline business case for the procurement, and the Council made the decision to advertise the contract on a technology neutral basis to enable the market to bring forward the best solution for Oxfordshire.</p> <p>I agree there are alternatives to EfW but none of them have been proposed in the bidding process. We have been offered EfW and the evaluation of the tenders has demonstrated that the proposed facilities are technically capable of providing the service we require and meeting the policies of the waste strategy. One of the bids also provides value for money for the life of the contract and therefore helps deliver the Council’s objectives of low tax and value for money.</p> <p>In terms of public health, legislation requires that EfW plants are operated to very high standards and the Environment Agency and Health Protection Agency would not allow a facility to operate unless this was the case. There are many EfW plants already in the UK and hundreds throughout Europe.</p> <p>To undertake an investigation of alternative technologies at this stage in the procurement process is not appropriate and could invalidate the procurement and introduce delay which is not in the interests of the council tax payer when an acceptable, safe and value for money solution has been offered.</p>
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER

Questions	Answers
<p>Given the decision yesterday about Ardley, Viridor and the incinerator, will Councillor Hudspeth assure Council that he will look at the alternative of mechanical - biological treatment before it is too late so that the Council is not unnecessarily saddled with a 25 year contract that will not work and will end up costing the taxpayer a great deal?</p>	<p>Again, I would just like to remind Councillor Tanner that he is a member of the Labour Party and they have been ruling the country for the last 12 years, unfortunately for us. Now if he is saying that the Labour policy is against energy from waste which is producing electricity for 22,000 homes and also providing heat as well then, please, why did Lord Mandelson not put that forward and make sure that it is Labour Policy because as far as I can see the Labour Policy is exactly the same. What we did yesterday was on a procurement basis and he should know that very well.</p>
<p>19. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER Does the Cabinet member agree that £6.7 million is a huge annual sum for the County Council to spend on external consultants and interim managers? Will he say how many permanent jobs at the Council this would pay for and by how much he intends to reduce this figure in 2009/10?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ROBERTSON, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL No, I do not agree that this is a huge sum in the context of the Council's overall pay bill. However I am aware of the expenditure on consultants and interims, indeed it has been reported quarterly for some time to Employees Joint Consultative Committee. The use of consultants and interims is currently under review and it was agreed at the last Employees Joint Consultative Committee that a protocol for their usage would be produced. Unison will be involved in this. The aim of this protocol will be to ensure that expenditure on these groups is controlled so that value for money is optimised and the employment rights of individuals are upheld. It is not possible at this stage to give a target for reductions which will result from the application of this protocol, however, its effects will be reported as soon as these are available. It would be possible to simply divide this amount by an average salary, plus on- costs, to give a number of posts which could be funded by this amount. This would not be very meaningful. The picture of usage of consultants and interims is complex. The Council uses consultants when our own employees do not have the expertise or capacity to undertake</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>specific tasks or projects. This is more efficient than maintaining an internal resource which is only required on an intermittent basis. In some areas the Council has difficulties recruiting staff with the necessary skills or experience for some roles. It would not be possible to simply do away with the current consultants and interims and replace them with employees because the various reasons for their use mentioned still apply and consequently it is not possible to set a specific target for reduction. The Council is looking to get the best value for money on a case by case basis and will continue to do so.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>On the question of employing consultants and temporary staff, will he indicate to the Council when this protocol will be made public or made available to Council members, and as I see he does not see it worth calculating the cost in terms of lost jobs by employing these consultants could I suggest to him that somewhere between 200-300 posts of permanent staff could be created if the County Council was more careful with its money?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Just continuing what my colleague Councillor Hudspeth said regarding Government and bad news. When we got this new Better Schools for the Future the process laid down by Government dictated that we had to use consultants so perhaps Councillor Tanner could direct some of his questions to his compatriots at Westminster. What I said was it would be possible simply to divide the amount by an average salary to give a number. You could guess 200-300. As I mentioned earlier, the use of consultants and agency staff is being handled through the Employees Joint Consultative Committee with Mark Fysh and Sue Corrigan and they are coming to an agreement on the way forward with that. We have no desire to use consultants or agency staff where they do not provide value for money and if something needs to be done quickly as regards the Better Schools for the Future, the Government dictates we use consultants. We have to listen at the moment but perhaps not for too long to this Government.</p>
<p>20. COUNCILLOR DAVID</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>TURNER</p> <p>Why did the new Council diary inserts handed out before the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 25 August show that there was no longer a Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group in advance of the members making a decision to scrap, keep or replace the Group with something else?</p>	<p>The answer to this question is the same one given to the Liberal Group Assistant on 26 June 2009 which was as follows: "The next meeting [of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee] is due to be held on 5 October. However I will be putting round a revised calendar of dates on Monday (once we have formal agreement from the Chairman of the Council to the extraordinary meeting planned for 25 August) and that will not include the remaining Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group dates. This is because with the number of new Chairman we are expecting they will want to look afresh at the dates and it may affect the pattern of meetings. Will keep you advised as soon as I know more."</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you for your response Councillor Mitchell. Do you agree that the decision to remove the Scrutiny Co-Ordinating Group from the new and revised Council diary in advance of a full Council meeting at which the decision about its future was to be debated and decided upon by Members, thereby pre-judging a Council decision, is disrespectful to every Member of this Council?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>No, I do not but the reason is set out in the answer that I gave you. The reason that it was not there was not one of believing it would not function in the future but one of not being clear about the dates. That was made clear to you in the answer you received and I do not think that is disrespectful.</p>

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