

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions	Answers
<p>1. COUNCILLOR ALAN ARMITAGE</p> <p>Small laminated notices have been attached to innumerable posts on the canal towpath between Oxford and Kidlington stating: "Notice to Anglers: Due to recent cases of Weil's disease in North Oxfordshire, angling is currently not permitted anywhere along the canal. This policy remains in place until further notice."</p> <p>The logos of the county council and of British Waterways are shown beneath. It was reported at a recent meeting of the City of Oxford Canal Partnership that BW had not approved this, and does not consider a ban on angling along the Oxford canal to be needed.</p> <p>Was the county council responsible for placing these signs, and, if so, by what authority?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JIM COUCHMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES</p> <p>I should first like to thank Dr McCarthy (PCT) for providing me with a very full answer to paragraph 1 of the question.</p> <p>Advice to prohibit angling along the Oxford – Kidlington stretch of the canal due to a risk of infection was not given by either involved local authority (City and Cherwell) or by us (Health Protection Agency) who would be the usual sources of advice for such issues. Queries to the county council and British Waterways given the reported presence of these logos on the notices did not identify the origin of these notices. Specifically the health and safety lead for British Waterways covering our patch did not and would not recommend restricting angling for these reasons, noting that their remit does not usually include infectious disease risk apart from for their own staff. Within the county council the legal department were able to confirm that they have not been involved in this issue and environment and economy were also unaware – although the query to them was during the current period of heavy snow with reduced capacity to follow up immediately. I understand that you are following up internally with your countryside services.</p> <p>Regarding more general advice on angling in relation to Weil's disease (Leptospirosis). Leptospirosis is a notifiable disease under public health law. A total of three suspected or confirmed cases have been reported to me in Oxfordshire during 2009, one fatal. None of these was associated with angling, although one was associated with other exposures to canal water. Angling is not a typical exposure in this disease.</p> <p>The infection can be present in the urine of many animals including cattle, dogs and rats. These animals host different species of leptospirae. The more severe forms of the disease are generally due to exposure to rat urine. This can be direct exposure to urine but is more usually by contact with water or soil contaminated by rat urine. Contact with broken skin or mucous membranes (e.g. mouth) are the main routes for transmission.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>The main risk from angling would be wading in contaminated water (unlikely for canal angling) or exposing cut skin to contaminated water. The risk can be greatly reduced by wearing suitable protective clothing, ensuring that broken skin is not exposed to contaminated water, and washing hands before eating after contact with river water. I would advise that following these precautions by anglers and others (canal boat owners etc) would be more proportionate to the risk than removing permission for angling which is a low risk activity.</p> <p>Reply from Councillor Rodney Rose (Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Question)</p> <p>With reference to the second part of the question, we have checked with Environment & Economy's Highways, Drainage and Countryside sections and none of them put the signs up. It has been suggested that perhaps the Environment Agency did so but we have not received a response from them as at 7 January 2010. Once it is clarified if they put the signs up (and if they did not do so) Environment & Economy will discuss further with British Waterways about whether the signs should remain.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I thank Councillor Couchman for his detailed reply and for confirming that it is not the view of this Council in any of its guises that angling should not be taking place. Councillor Rose says that they are continuing to try to find out who put these signs on posts and things all the way between Oxford and Kidlington along the Canal. It might help for him or one of the officers to have one of the signs because they definitely were there: they are not any longer because the anglers have taken them all down, quite rightly. I would like to ask when he has identified who is responsible for putting up these signs (because it is presumably one of our</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am quite happy to agree that with Councillor Armitage. I must say this was one of the more mysterious questions with which I have been challenged over the last 4 years and I am as interested as he is to see whether the good Dr McCarthy is able to find out who actually did put the signs up.</p>

Questions	Answers
partners), that they should liaise with the Oxford City officer who has specific responsibility for promoting angling?	
<p>2. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>What is the cost of the Oxford School IEB, including pro rata salaries of members employed by the County Council?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The anticipated cost (based on other IEBs) will be very roughly £1000 per month.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>From what budget will this £1000 per month come? Does it come from the Council's budget or from the School's budget?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>My assumption is that it will come from the Council's budget for Raising Achievement Service as this is a significant intervention.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>If ULT were to be given Oxford School as an academy, and did not purchase services from the County Council, how much income would the Council lose per year as compared with the present situation?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The total loss of income for services provided would be c£211,000, based on services bought back in 2009-10, but equally they would be services that the Local Authority would no longer need to provide, therefore neutralising the loss!</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>Is it the Council's intention to sell the footprint of the 1930s building or the footprint of the whole built-up site?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The Expression of Interest (EOI) submitted to the DCSF said "<i>It is proposed that the footprint of the original Oxford School buildings (1930s build) be considered for disposal to generate a capital receipt to contribute to the primary school element of the academy should this be an agreed outcome of the feasibility stage. It may be possible to dispose of additional built area footprint as the County Council owns an adjacent playing field which could be added to the academy site to ensure sufficient playing fields.</i>" This EOI is no longer valid since the withdrawal of ULT as a sponsor. The Council's intentions in this respect will next be dependent on a new EOI agreed with a new sponsor. I understand that the governing body had previously expressed a wish to dispose of some property to fund</p>

Questions	Answers
	new build.
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I do not find the answer helpful. I asked the question as to what the intention of the Cabinet is in terms of selling off parts of the Oxford School site. The answer is we will find out when we come to the end of the expression of interest procedure which will be, as Councillor Waine knows, at the very end. I wonder if he would not think it would be better to allow the stakeholders to have a voice in the formation of these plans which are of great interest, of course, to the entire community?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>My understanding is that there was discussion in the previous governing bodies around this and whether the school went down the 'Building Schools for the Future' route or whether it went down the 'Academy' route. The view was taken that if I can call them the 'old buildings' (the basic school as it is now) would have potential to be sold, they would prefer to site the new buildings away from there and the sale of that site would go towards the cost of the new buildings and they would be able to maximise on what was put up because whether they were 'Building Schools for the Future' or 'Academy', it is unlikely that the whole school would be rebuilt.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>Does the Cabinet intend to build a Nursery School, a Primary School, a Special School and a replacement Secondary School on the present site (minus the area which is to be sold)?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>These options would have been explored as part of the feasibility study following on from approval of the EOI. The feasibility study, like the consultation, must now wait until a new EOI is agreed with a new sponsor.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>These are really the same questions as they are very important and large scale issues at stake. The Cabinet in its expression of interest mentioned all these things in the previous one which failed after a year of creating chaos in the school and I may say that some of us expected it to fail and warned the Cabinet</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The expression of interest was put in in August of 2009 and in fact we were, as a local authority, introduced to ULT as their preferred sponsor some 14 months ago. The process went through discussion within the governing body and at this level and as far as we were concerned we wished to maintain all options open. It has been our intention all the way through to look to the possibility of putting a primary school on site which would involve a nursery school and as far as the special school provision is concerned that question has been answered before because it has been asked by Councillor Fooks and maintain options open. If we did not maintain those options, I am quite sure that there would be</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Member about that but it is not unusual for them not to listen. The question is: did decisions left to the last minute leave people in the dark? Why would it not be better to come out front: if there is no sign of a decision, all the better? Let everyone have a voice who is entitled to have a voice.</p>	<p>members here, in the future, if suddenly the whole thing closed in on us and we needed room on site, who would say 'Why was provision not made when you were looking at the Oxford School site?' So, at the moment, we are just holding options open for this.</p>
<p>6. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>What is the range of prices the Cabinet anticipates the sale of Oxford School land to raise?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>Land valuation on the site ranges from £1.6m per hectare (estimated current value) up to £3m per hectare which might be anticipated if the market recovers.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>It means that the amount of money that the Cabinet expects to - or could - get from sale of the Oxford School land is a very considerable amount of money. I wonder if it would be possible for Councillor Waine to assure us that the interests of the children and the community of Oxford School would be uppermost, rather than this rather large sum of money which closure through an academy would make available for the County?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The answer to that is 'Yes' and, until these figures were given, this did not figure largely in our discussions because our discussion has been wholly around the whole school improvement issue and not to do with property cost issues.</p>
<p>7. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>All the political parties that elect County or City Councillors in the areas from which Oxford School pupils come, and Oxford City Council itself, have said publicly that they do not consider the</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>Major decisions about changes in a school's status (such as this) are made by the Cabinet. These decisions are informed by the outcome of formal and informal consultation and take account of local members' views, among others. The consultation is relation to Oxford school is on hold for the reasons explained above.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>proposed academy to be in the best interests of the children and their communalities. Why are the views of these elected representatives being ignored?</p>	
<p>8. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>Will Councillor Waine assure us that, if a clear majority of responses to the forthcoming consultation are opposed to the School being closed to be turned into an academy, that the Council will abandon that project?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>While Cabinet decisions are informed by consultation outcomes they are not driven by a simple arithmetical analysis of responses. Responses need to be evaluated and weighted; final decisions need to be driven by the Cabinet's wider objectives which, in this case, are to ensure the best possible deal for the pupils of Oxford school and the wider community.</p>
<p>9. COUNCILLOR ANNE PURSE</p> <p>At a time when we as a Council should be doing our best to save energy, the design of the new reception area, with the single main door letting cold air directly into the entrance hall, appears to be far less energy efficient than what it replaced. In turn, this makes conditions unpleasant for staff working in the area. Was this new reception area designed bearing in mind the Council's need to save energy?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KEITH MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The refurbishment of County Hall was certainly planned with the objective of improving energy efficiency quite significantly. For example, the removal of the partitions will have helped the heating and air circulation system to work in the manner for which it was designed and the new light fittings are much more efficient than the older ones. The improved performance of the building will have been offset by the increase in the number of occupants and the increased use of IT. We are still awaiting the detailed consumption figures by floor before and after refurbishment but, when they are available, I will provide them and will also have some analysis done so that they can be expressed as consumption by occupant which is probably the fairer measure.</p> <p>When the design of reception was being worked on we were emphatic that the temperature levels for the reception staff needed to be acceptable at all times and that we wished to avoid having to close the automatic doors other than under exceptional circumstances. The air cushions that were specified have a high level of barrier and are generally very effective. However, there have undoubtedly been problems. Initially it seems that the heating in the reception area was not coming on early enough and one of the radiators was not working. They have now both been dealt with. We are continuing to monitor the temperature and, over the past few days, it has generally been acceptable but there have been a couple of occasions when it has been lower than it should be. During periods such</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>as this which we might have to accept will not be as exceptional as they have been in the past, I think that it is inevitable that the automatic doors will need to be closed. I have asked for a report on the implications of that but my current understanding is that there have been very few visitors in wheelchairs or other visitors who might have a difficulty because of the closure of the automatic doors. I will continue to monitor the situation.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I do understand that there has been a number of hiccups and problems with the entrance hall but I am specifically asking about the air cushioning in this instance. I had hoped that some lessons had been learnt from the problems with the doors that arose at Speedwell House. I had understood that air cushions were quite a high energy way of maintaining a barrier and that double doors were much more energy efficient:: I may be wrong in that but I would like further information about why an air cushion was chosen, if indeed that was a specific choice, and whether that choice was based on any environmental considerations such as the energy use or saving or whatever. I would like more information especially on these specific issues as we did have a double door system previously which we now have not got.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am no expert on air cushions or double doors: I will secure a technical answer and forward it. I will say that the old double doors system irritated me incredibly because you could not get through it at a sensible pace. It snapped you between the first and the second set of double doors unless you crawled through. Rather more importantly, I think what has happened in the reception area in County Hall is a huge improvement on what we had before: it is much more welcoming to visitors, much more able to accommodate groups of people when they come, has internet access, is more comfortable for the staff, is better equipped for the disabled, does bring reception and hallkeepers together and provide better security and so in about 99.9% of the case is successful. We will see what we can do about the draught and I will get a technical answer about the double doors.</p>
<p>NOTE: The Chairman advised that Councillor Hudspeth was not present at the meeting because he was away on Council business. The Chairman invited Councillor Tanner to put his supplementary questions to Questions 10, 11 and 12 and Councillor Hudspeth would be asked to provide written answers to them.</p>	

Questions	Answers
<p>10. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Given the claimed parlous state of the County's finances, should Oxfordshire not follow the example of Oxford City Council and redouble its efforts to shrink its carbon footprint? Will the Cabinet member say how much could be saved for the taxpayer if the Council's carbon footprint was reduced by a quarter over 3 years?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>The Council has been improving its energy efficiency for many years prior to setting the challenging target of reducing its carbon footprint by 18% by 2012. The Council continues to be committed to hitting this target, ensuring an absolute and sustained reduction in its carbon footprint.</p> <p>The Carbon Management Programme's Strategy and Implementation Plan anticipated that the 18% target would avoid up to £11 million of costs associated with carbon. The Council is in the process of achieving this through, for example, investing in part-night street lighting over the next 2 years which will achieve £1million savings over the next 5 years.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am pleased that the County Council has now upped its programme on reducing carbon omissions: I think we all welcome that. I wonder whether Councillor Hudspeth would consider raising them to 25% over that period as a small district council called Oxford City has done and thereby saving an extra £4m, more than £4m a year which could be put into the black hole which the Cabinet has created with their assumptions about future spending. It is another £4m that could be spent on pet projects by the Tory backbenchers.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>See above note.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Will the Cabinet member tell Council when he expects Viridor to appeal against the refusal of planning permission for an</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>The Council is procuring residual waste treatment to reduce the amount of household waste that is landfilled to meet EU and national targets, and avoid substantial fines and payment of increases in landfill tax. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas over 20 times</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>incinerator (or energy from waste plant) at Ardley? What discussions have Council officers had with Viridor and others about a more environmental alternative, should the appeal not succeed?</p>	<p>more harmful than CO₂. Diverting waste away from landfill will reduce the amount of methane gas which is released from landfills and therefore provide real environmental benefits too.</p> <p>Viridor Waste Management are the Council's preferred bidders for the delivery of a treatment facility and as a Member of the Cabinet with portfolio for Waste Management we welcome the planning appeal that Viridor have now submitted.</p> <p>The new contract will only be for the treatment of residual waste that is remaining after recycling and composting. Oxfordshire is currently achieving a county wide recycling and composting rate of over 47% and is on course to exceed the target of 55% recycling and composting by 2020 in the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy. Alongside the introduction of food waste treatment and food waste collections from households by the district councils, having in place residual waste treatment will result in Oxfordshire achieving what the Government has recently described as zero waste. This will mean virtually no municipal waste being landfilled.</p> <p>The Council also remains committed to an energy from waste incinerator to dispose of residual waste in Oxfordshire. Incineration is a well proven and established technology and there are 20 incinerators in the UK, 128 in France, 65 in Germany, 30 in Denmark, 29 in Sweden and 28 in Switzerland. There are three incinerators just down the road in Hampshire and others in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Stoke-on-Trent and Sheffield. There are incinerators in the centres of Paris and Vienna and two on the outskirts of London.</p> <p>Energy from waste also has very good environmental performance. In an evaluation of different technologies energy from waste with combined heat and power scored best with the smallest carbon footprint. Energy from waste without combined heat and power scored on a par with the best of the mechanical biological options. Energy from waste offers a very good environmental solution to dealing with residual waste and far far better than landfill.</p> <p>Fine tuning of the contract has now commenced with Viridor to clarify and confirm their commitments and to prepare the final contract documentation. The contract is expected to</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am grateful to Councillor Hudspeth for a very long answer and I am sorry that he did not answer either of the questions that I put. When does he expect the public inquiry to be held? I am assuming he means sometime in the spring: can he confirm that and can he give us a date as soon as possible? He does not mention that there will be any discussions about the environmental alternatives should the plan for incineration fail. Would he again look at that and see if that is a possibility?</p>	<p>be awarded in Spring 2010.</p> <p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>See above note.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Despite the talk of 'access to Oxford' will the Cabinet member agree that traffic congestion, particularly in the rush hours, is getting worse? Will he introduce bus priority measures, on the Oxford ring road and at Junction 9, to enable commuters from Abingdon, Witney, Bicester and elsewhere to get in and out of Oxford more quickly?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>The South East Plan places an obligation on the City and District Councils in Oxfordshire to accommodate high levels of development (over 50,000 new homes) between now and 2026. This will of course place additional strains on the County's transport network and congestion is projected to increase if appropriate measures are not taken. The Access to Oxford project is being developed to help support this growth, as well as tackling existing problems on the network</p> <p>The highways elements of the Access to Oxford project are in the Regional Funding Programme for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16. This will include schemes to tackle congestion on the Southern Approaches to Oxford (approaching and through Littlemore, Heyford Hill, Kennington and Hinksey Hill Roundabouts), on the Northern Approaches (approaching and through Wolvercote, Pear Tree, Loop Farm, Kidlington and Cutteslowe Roundabouts) and on the A34 itself. Officers are currently working on a Feasibility Study for this project, due to be published in February 2010. This study will outline the possible schemes that could be delivered as part of Access to Oxford and will identify significant opportunities for bus priority through these junctions as well as schemes to reduce</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>congestion for all road users. Following environmental surveys and a period of consultation during 2010, preferred schemes will be identified and worked up in more detail so that they can be presented in a business case to the Department for Transport in 2011. Assuming approval from the Department for Transport is forthcoming, which we have every reason to believe will be, any planning enquiries that may be needed can be completed during 2012 so that construction can commence when the money becomes available in 2013.</p> <p>As well as the Access to Oxford proposals, the Highways Agency are expected to commence improvement works on M40 Junction 9 later this spring. This scheme has arisen following continued lobbying by the County Council and is expected to reduce queuing significantly, particularly on the A41 approach from Bicester and on the southbound exit from the M40. The County Council will continue to lobby for further improvements to ensure this junction is able to cope with projected traffic growth in the long term.</p> <p>Congestion indicators measuring ‘the journey time per mile in the morning peak’ and ‘journey time reliability in the morning peak’ have been calculated on a quarterly basis since October 2008.</p> <p>When comparing Quarter 3 data from 2008 to 2009 there is evidence of a minimal increase in congestion. There is however insufficient data available to give a categorical response to this question. It is anticipated in 12 months’ time that conclusions regarding congestion patterns will be made with greater confidence, when a complete two year data set will be available. Statistics collated to date, show a significant difference in congestion between the school term time and non-term time periods. It also suggests that congestion levels in Oxford are seasonal, with a decrease from July to October.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council also monitors the number of vehicles traveling into central Oxford during the morning peak. Although this is not a specific measurement of congestion, the data reflects the overall traffic trends on a quarterly basis. Over recent years, traffic volumes during peak periods have shown little change. Data collated thus far for 2009/10 for the morning peak suggests that that traffic levels have slightly decreased compared with 2008/9.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Does he want to tell the public that they will have to wait until 2013 before there will be any improvements to the congestion situation or would he like me to do it?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>See above note.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>The situation regarding Oxford School has changed significantly since the Cabinet first entered negotiations towards giving it as an Academy to ULT. The School did very well in the 2009 exams, with the highest CVA in the County, and ULT has been forbidden to take on new schools because of its difficulties. The DCSF seems to have suggested that the County should carry on searching for another Academy organisation for Oxford School. This would mean an additional period of uncertainty which would be damaging to the School. Would Councillor Waine consider removing the uncertainty by allowing the School to continue as a Foundation School, while monitoring its results to see if it continues to make satisfactory progress?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The school's recent results are welcome but the school remains of concern to the Local Authority. As a National Challenge school the need for a significant structural solution remains and every effort is being made to address this as swiftly as possible. Some uncertainty is, regrettably, inevitable but, in the short term, the interests of current pupils will be protected as the IEB seeks to secure a sound basis for future improvement in the school and promote high standards of educational achievement. The school remains as a Foundation school in the meantime.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am very disappointed in the answer. It means that there will a further period of uncertainty which will cause Oxford School staff to start to leave and pupils</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Our understanding from the outset as far as Oxford Community School was concerned was that we were being asked to put in place significant structural change and that is why from the very outset the Department itself put forward the view that the academy route was the route and equally the Government's National Challenge advisers also underline that route.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>not to come to us, neither of which are good for the children at the school. I would like to ask him though if he would kindly look up the national challenge rules. My understanding is that there is no requirement that a significant structural solution be imposed if the school improves within the next two or three years and my understanding is that there is no need for structural change i.e. no need for an academy if the school has been improving. While we cannot be sure that it will improve and we cannot be sure that it will not, could he look that up and come back with an answer to this?</p>	<p>The situation is such that yes I would not disagree with those who say that in terms of contextual value added performance Oxford Community School is at the top as far as Oxfordshire is concerned. When one actually looks at the raw scores it is at the other end and this is where you get the dichotomy as far as those two are concerned and you need to read the two very closely together. I will look from things I was going to say in the debate that is coming up under Councillor Stevens's motion. In terms of structural change in that school, for 5 years, with one exception, there has been a trend of a falling roll and to what extent is that falling roll in itself the major part of the school's problem. That is something structural which needs restructuring. If you actually look at the schools that serve the Oxford School, within close proximity, no school sends over 50% of their children to Oxford School: the nearest place is Larkrise School which sends something like 45% of its pupils. The nearest school, I understand is St Christopher's, and they send 30% of their pupils. This is why a structural option is the only way.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR LARRY SANDERS</p> <p>The Business Improvement and Efficiency Strategy for 2010/11 to 2014/15 for Social and Community Services, Older People, has the following entry at SCP 16:</p> <p>“Continuing Care- Implications of PCT Changes in Eligibility”. These amount to increased pressures of:</p> <p>£1.1 million in 2010/11 .8 million in 2011/12 .5 million in 2012/13 .2 million in 2013/14</p> <p>(a) What is the evidence which the PCT has given to the County Council to justify these substantial reductions in NHS responsibility for</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JIM COUCHMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES</p> <p>It is clear that Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust is now applying the national regulations for NHS Continuing Healthcare and its funding more rigorously than hitherto. In a response to a query from a service user's son, the PCT's Interim Head of adult community nursing and continuing care wrote in October:-</p> <p>“Over the past six months the Oxfordshire continuing healthcare assessment process for eligibility has been subject to a thorough review so as to ensure it is in line with the latest national guidance from the Department of Health. Our continuing healthcare assessments are carried out by using a national decision support tool, and the decision about eligibility at panel is made by qualified health and social care professionals against these domains. The decision is subject to an external review to ensure equity and a robust process. Whilst we can make minor adjustments to the documentation we are required to follow national guidance and therefore are not able to change the process substantially.</p> <p>Our assessors use the available evidence in their assessments, following this panel members review this evidence against the descriptor levels.”</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Continuing Care?</p> <p>(b) What legal advice has the Council received about the acceptability of the PCT's attempts to change the eligibility criteria which have been established by national legislation and case law?</p> <p>(c) How will the County Council make sure that the criteria and their application are legally correct and seen to be correct?</p>	<p>From the above it is clear that the PCT has tightened their assessments to fall in line with national advice. If substantial evidence is not produced applications are now turned down. As a result of this tightening of eligibility, Oxfordshire County Council is now challenging more decisions on behalf of service users and disputes have resulted which have gone 50/50.</p> <p>At my request a thorough investigation of the way in which NHS continuing healthcare is being administered is being undertaken currently by senior managers. Cllr. Sanders' question highlights the need to consider legal aspects and this will be done, along with finding out how comparator authorities are faring with this complex issue. It should be remembered that NHS continuing healthcare is administered by the Primary Care Trust and that we play a minor role. The sums included at SCP 16 as pressures for the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 are a precaution against a reducing number of service users qualifying for Continuing Healthcare payments and becoming a charge to the County Council either immediately or as self-funders capital dwindles to the upper threshold for social payment.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Councillor Couchman in his answer says that the PCT are changing their criteria. I think it is important to say that previously they were approving far less than the average and they now approve a full NHS payment for people with severe disabilities. We have now reached pretty much the average and now they seem to be wanting to go backwards. Is there any room in this whole system for any kind of public scrutiny to see exactly what does happen with regard to the way in which these complex issues are handled?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>As I have said in my answer I have requested an in-depth study of the way in which this scheme is being administered at the present time and I am sure that we will provide that as soon as possible and bring it to the appropriate scrutiny committee.</p>