

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received. The time allowed for this agenda item will not exceed 30 minutes. Should any questioner not have received an answer in that time, a written answer will be provided.

Questions	Answers
<p>1. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>May I request the Leader and/or the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy to write a strong letter to the Highways Agency to declare Oxfordshire's disappointment at the state of the central carriageway and verges of the A34 in this county (covered in plastic and waste, especially around the Hinckseys but far from exclusively), to point out that this reflects badly on the County whether rightly so or not, when it is the HA's responsibility? The same request also applies to being a good neighbour where illegal ragwort grows unrestricted as is the case throughout the length of the A34 and is free to distribute its seeds at its own whim.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The Highways Agency has a Litter Strategy which was published in 2014. In this document their vision is "A network predominantly free from litter, without compromising safety and delivered affordably". Officers have spoken to EM, the Highways Agency contractor for the A34, and they have confirmed that central reserve litter picking is programmed to fit in with other works, in order to minimise disruption and is undertaken by the relevant District Council.</p> <p>With regard to ragwort, EM have a Ragwort Control Policy which was issued in early 2012 which explains how they will deal with any ragwort which is either reported to them or identified during routine inspections.</p> <p>I have asked officers to make the Highways Agency aware of your concerns at their next meeting with them.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for his answer. Could I point out that the A34 around Botley Interchange yesterday was equally revolting and would be grateful if you add that to you discussions with the Highway Agency?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Yes I will.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>2. COUNCILLOR MARK CHERRY</p> <p>Will the cabinet member for Environment tell me if contractor Skanska has the capacity to contract out all the line painting in Oxfordshire and then have a schedule in place to have white/yellow lines renewed before they start to fade? Or furthermore has the budget cuts that continue to hit Oxfordshire County Council mean that the funding is no longer able to sustain the line painting program in Oxfordshire? I therefore ask the highways department at OCC to draw up a report on line painting which should be made available to the public.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The majority of budget for replacement of white lines was included in the Area Stewardship budget when it was introduced in 2011. Some councillors have used this budget to refresh lining over the years but others have had other priorities for their fund allocation. As you know, the Area Stewardship Fund has been withdrawn as part of this year's budget reductions and so we will not be able to refresh all the lines in the county but will be remarking statutory and safety lining as and when this is required.</p> <p>Skanska is able to contract in line marking resources as required by OCC. They are currently not contracted to replace all lines before they start to fade, but replace lines as and when OCC instruct them to.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you for your response. However, I have been up to the Academy to check whether the lines had been repainted and unfortunately some were still faded. When will the works be done please?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I will look into the matter and provide you with a written response.</p>
<p>3. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Could the Leader of the Council confirm that he has given his backing to a large scale expansion of Kidlington Airport focused on the concept that the London Oxford Airport will be a hub for a network of international</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I'm not sure which newspaper Cllr Williams has been reading but I can confirm either he misread the article or I was misquoted. I have never said anything about a large scale expansion of Kidlington airport. I have said that I recognise that the runway length is similar to that of London City airport giving it the potential to fly many destinations within Europe. I've also stated that I've used</p>

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<p>scheduled commercial flights?</p> <p>What evidence does he have of the economic viability of such a project and does he appreciate the environmental damage that will be caused by increased Co2 emissions locally and the impact on the people of Kidlington of having an international airport virtually within yards of their front door.</p>	<p>the airport to fly to Jersey and found the service simple and easy to use. In fact I checked in and went through security 15 minutes after leaving my house.</p> <p>It is in our interest to work in partnership with what could be a key transport hub in the future. Our support to date is based on the fact that use of the Airport is well below the number of passengers a year it is licenced for, so we are working to support them in providing new services which will support local people and growth. These would be services that support the local economy – providing better access into Oxfordshire with the potential to actually reduce emissions with reduced distance to travel compared to Heathrow and Gatwick.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Can we take it that you are in favour of a massive expansion?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am not in favour of massive expansion of Kidlington Airport, but the Airport is currently underutilised so I am in favour of full utilisation of the existing capacity of the Airport.</p>
<p>4. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Recently the County Council announced it wants to build a number of new Park and Rides on the Oxfordshire Green Belt. Although it is true that the figures using Park and Rides have increased on what basis have traffic planner concluded that such large extra numbers will be required?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO SMITH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>The Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) proposes expansion and updating of the Park & Ride system. With 100,000 homes and 85,000 jobs planned in Oxfordshire by 2031, Park & Ride will play an important role in keeping car traffic out of the city whilst providing a convenient travel option for those who do not have direct bus access to the city’s main destinations. The additional spaces proposed have taken into account the spare capacity in the current system, the number of additional users resulting from growth in the county, and the number of people currently driving into the city who would switch to Park & Ride as a result of the measures in the OTS.</p> <p>The extra capacity would be delivered over the next 20 years. Further work is needed to determine the best exact locations for new Park & Ride sites. No specific sites are proposed at this stage. It is worth noting that some of the</p>

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	existing sites are already located within the Oxford Green Belt.
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Is that an agreement that you are going to build on the greenbelt?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>We have already had to build on the green belt for the existing Park & Ride sites and we will need to consider the possibility of building on green belt on the locations identified for future sites.</p>
<p>5. COUNCILLOR DAVID WILLIAMS</p> <p>Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that the introduction of the Self Registration system for voters has been a disaster for democracy with a drop of over 11,000 in the City alone (over 10% decline) and nationally taking well over 1million people off the register. As all the Districts are recording significant declines what is the County Council trying to do to encourage voters to register?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>The deadline for registering to vote does not expire until Monday 20th April 2015. Since the dissolution of Parliament and the start of the restricted period, the election process will receive a significantly higher profile through the national press and television coverage, highlighting the surrounding issues. It is envisaged that this will also lead to an increase in the number of people registering their right to vote. This is likely to intensify from the Publication of Persons Nominated, which is due to take place on Friday, 10th April 2015. Indeed the Electoral Commission recently has announced that one million online registration applications have been made since 16 March.</p> <p>It is therefore perhaps premature, at this time, to determine whether registration is greater or lower than previously. In any case, this would be a question that Cllr Williams should ask the City and District Council Electoral Registration Officers.</p> <p>This is because the maintenance and publication of the Register of Electors is a function of the respective City and District Councils. Each of these Councils has a dedicated page on their websites explaining the process for registering to vote, how to ask for postal votes and proxy votes, and also directing members of the public to the on-line registration service at https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote , which is the preferred method for registration. Each authority has undertaken proactive public engagement and registration work.</p> <p>However, the County Council has also assisted the City and District Councils</p>

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	<p>under Regulation 35A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001. This says that a County Council may disclose county council-held data to electoral registration authorities to assist them in their role of maintaining the electoral register. Information has therefore been disclosed to each of the City and District Council Electoral Registration Officers under agreed data sharing processes for a two-fold purpose in connection with Individual Electoral Registration: firstly to enable them to verify persons already on the electoral register; and secondly to identify other persons who may not be on the register and/or who may be of voting age on the day of the election. The County Council has therefore fulfilled its responsibilities and has contributed directly to ensuring that electoral registration is maximised.</p> <p>Beyond this, as the elections this year are not for the full County Council, no additional proactive work has been commissioned. Given the constraints on resources, it is not appropriate to commission general or targeted publicity which, in any event, could lead to the contention that the Council was interfering in elections in which it has no part, either democratically or statutorily.</p> <p>I am confident, however, that the County Council has played its part fully in assisting County and District Council partners in their responsibilities for voter registration.</p> <p>I can confirm that at all opportunities recently including many visits to schools I have stressed the importance of voting.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Can I take the response to mean that in fact you are not going to help the districts in trying to get as many people registered before deadline of 20 April.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>If you look at a recent article from the LGC on 9 April, it has stated that since there was been a Government campaign to get people to register on line (the shortfall of a million voters that had disappeared previously) a million have registered on line, so actually I think the system is working. The County Council certainly has been playing its part in making people aware to vote and register. I</p>

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	think you have got to wait until 20 April before you can actually make a decision as to whether it has been a success or not.
<p>6. COUNCILLOR SAM COATES</p> <p>Recently the Leader of the Council was photographed warmly receiving a petition from the Disinvest in Fossil Fuels Campaign and apparently wished them well in their efforts to convince local authorities to withdraw their pension funds' investments from fossil fuels.</p> <p>Does this mean that the Leader of the Council will be writing to the Oxfordshire Pensions Committee urging them to invest in safer long term securities than fossil fuels and will he immediately order the orientation away from investment in fossil fuel companies in the County Councils own day to day investment portfolio.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>No.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>If the Leader isn't planning to act on the suggestion given as a result of the petition, can I ask what action he is planning to take and what his response might be?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The documents were passed on to the Pension Committee and that is what I stressed and said I would do, and it is for the Pension Committee to make any decision accordingly.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>7. COUNCILLOR GILL SANDERS</p> <p>Can Councillor Carter please assure the parents, students and staff of Rose Hill Primary School that the fabric of the building, including roofs and windows, will be repaired and improved to adequate standards before they all have to face another cold winter and can you tell me when the necessary work will be done? If our children are to improve their performance and achieve good results they and their teachers need decent accommodation in which to work.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR NICK CARTER, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS & CUSTOMER SERVICES</p> <p>Rose Hill Primary School has been assessed based on the standard qualifying criteria and the asphalt roof repair including the clerestory windows are currently on the 2015 /2016 programme. We have been able to allocate funding to address these issues in the coming financial year, though as always, this will still need to be prioritised against the on-going competing demands of schools across the whole of Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Following the OCC funding gateway process, once the detail planning of this work commences, the timings and logistical details will be discussed with the school to minimise any impact.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you for your reply. I am still a little concerned you have said that the issues about Rose Hill School would be addressed in the 2015/16 programme. Can you assure me that the children of Rose Hill School will not have to go through the same conditions they experienced last winter and whilst I recognise, as you say, things need to be prioritised against the on-going competing demands of schools across Oxfordshire. Are there any other schools that actually suffer the same kind of problems with heating that Rose Hill experienced?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Chairman, let me assure Councillor Sanders that it is not a County Council conspiracy to ensure that all children under a certain age remain cold during the winter. Occasionally there are heating problems, occasionally boilers malfunction as was the case, distressingly I accept, at Rose Hill. It was distressing because it was a substantial problem with a heating system there which could not be sorted as soon as we would have liked. There have been one or two other schools in the county where there have been problems with heating, not as severe as Rose Hill I have to admit. As far as next year is concerned I have asked for assurances that the other boilers at the school will also be overhauled in good time so that there is a proper service on all aspects of the heating system and as Councillor Sanders knows there will be repairs done to the roof and the clerestory windows during the next programme. There is also going to be some other windows replaced or repaired but there is only a limited amount of money available for them, but the worst of those will be sorted as well.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>In 2016/17 the School Direct Grants reverts to the schools themselves and so we will have to make new and different arrangements with the relevant schools should large capital programme repairs be needed and they be unable to meet them themselves. But they will have to come up with their own sort of rolling programme that will tie in with our own ability to assist them.</p>
<p>8. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>This Council is making various changes as a result of the horrific crimes uncovered in the course of the Bullfinch trial. We have recognised that councillors need to be better informed and ask more searching questions. The obvious way of ensuring that this happens is to have all the scrutiny committees chaired by opposition members. When will the Conservatives at last agree to follow good practice and make this important change?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I think that it's inappropriate to link these two matters. May I remind you that committees are cross-party and not solely reliant on the Chairman to ask searching questions.</p> <p>To answer your question, I would say that it's important that the best person is chosen for the job, rather than having to abide by any rules or quotas, such as the Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I wonder if the Leader is aware that the serious case review does link the governance of the Council with the Bullfinch cases and in view of this there is a public perception that if the administration also chairs scrutiny for instance, Education Scrutiny, that is wrong and it looks as though you are wanting to be in control of everything and I wonder what the Leader is going to do about this?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I think that perhaps there has been a different sort of leadership over the last few years, which is not controlling. It is also interesting that the Chairman of Performance Scrutiny Committee is actually from the opposition.</p> <p>The point I was making is that all members have the ability to ask searching questions and I think it is appropriate they do, and they shouldn't just reply on a chairman to be asking appropriate questions. It should be about all members, including members of the opposition who are on scrutiny committees during that period and I think that is my answer to the question.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>9. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Please can you put pressure on the DfE, which is being very unhelpful about the bids that Cherwell School is putting in to pay for an expansion? This year the school has had to turn away more than 200 children, of whom 100 live in the catchment area, including in Jericho, which is very close to Cherwell School. There is no other secondary school anywhere nearby, so the families that didn't get a place are distraught.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>The Cherwell School is an academy and as such the Council has no locus in relation to bids that its trust might make to the Education Funding Agency. I share your disappointment, and that of your constituents, that The Cherwell's bid to the EFA was unsuccessful as the Council had hoped to support a joined up scheme along the same lines as it is supporting at Cheney School. The Council will therefore proceed with discussions with The Cherwell School to agree a modest expansion of one form of entry (30 extra places per year group) funded from developer (Section 106) contributions.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you for this answer, I just wondered if you could please give us an indication of the timescales when we might hope to see an actual increase in the size of Cherwell School.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Sorry no I don't have a timescale, we will do it as soon as we can though.</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>The performance of Oxfordshire children who are eligible for free school meals is far below the level of children on free school meals nationally, in every key stage. How do you account for this and what are you doing about it?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MELINDA TILLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES</p> <p>The Education and Learning team in CEF are working closely with colleagues in Early Intervention and Children's Social Care to support schools and are developing a strategy for closing the attainment gap in Oxfordshire.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p data-bbox="208 228 674 256">SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p data-bbox="208 300 837 480">Yes, now I wondered if Chair I might ask a question of Peter Clark with regard to this. Is it an oversight or is it intentional that the Cabinet Member has omitted to answer half my question?</p>	<p data-bbox="884 228 1323 256">SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p data-bbox="884 300 2033 368">The Chairman indicated that she was satisfied that the question had been answered and brought the item to a close.</p>