

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 JEAN FOOKS</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member for schools tell Council what percentage of children within the catchment area of primary schools, who gave the school as their preferred choice, were offered a place at the school?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>No. This would require a special piece of work. However, the overall success rate for meeting first preferences was 89% for primary and 90% for secondary schools. This would include applications from within catchment areas which would constitute the majority of successful applications.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am just wondering is there some information that is not readily available, do I have to make a FOI request in order to get it?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I am advised that this in time this would be available but it would be quite costly to put together and my answer “no” was in the interests of saving money.</p>
<p>2. COUNCILLOR JEAN FOOKS</p> <p>There has been much concern at the inaccurate forecasting of numbers of children needing a place in reception classes in September 2010 across the county. What improvements have been made to the forecasting for the numbers needing places in September 2011?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The growth in demand for Reception places witnessed in the last three years has continued and has intensified. A number of factors are combining e.g. increased birth rates, changing patterns of migration and reduced numbers entering the independent sector. National forecasts which are used to underpin the base forecasts for the population of Oxfordshire have reflected this for the first time this year and indicate that birth rates will continue to rise until at least 2012. This has been translated to show predicted impact on the mainstream school population in Oxfordshire as part of the annual update of school forecasts completed each summer. Official forecasts are always fairly conservative and officers have been working to identify trends and likely demand at a more local level in tandem with the formal process to ensure place planning is more efficient. This has included monitoring of applications for and allocations of places and of trends in the local school sector such as drift</p>

	<p>from the independent sector, closure of small independent schools. The draft forecasts were available much earlier this year so that officers have had time to compare them with this more local knowledge and adjust them where necessary to be more accurate on a school by school basis.</p> <p>The admission numbers for September 2011 were published in April and included a number of increases to accommodate further demand for reception places and building schemes are currently being progressed. Where trends in applications have indicated further need above that forecast, for unforeseen reasons, officers have considered options and will visit any schools where further places may be required during term 1. An informal consultation is due to start shortly with schools in setting admission numbers for September 2012 which is anticipated to be the year of greatest demand overall for reception places. This will enable potential for additional places to be identified in good time.</p> <p>In short the combination of better national data and systematic analysis of admissions trends and local situations has improved the quality of our forecasts this year. This will be invaluable in allowing us to ensure sufficient places are available in 2011 and 2012. The next challenge will be to ensure the secondary school forecasts from 2016/17 academic year adequately reflect the impact of growth in the primary sector since 2008 and allow us to plan for how this demand will be met.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I would obviously like an answer to the local question of what is going to happen about the school places for the children in North Oxford and Wolvercote in particular?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Plans that are in place that are in the current year across the county something like 500 extra places have been found for 5 year olds and 200 of those are within Oxford City taking in the Botley and Cumnor area. The pressures are expected to continue and peak but the reality is we are very much part of a national picture. We are working very hard to meet that need both within the City and within the County and I would have to add that schools are working with us on that and I would also like to take the opportunity thanking the Admissions Team who are working very very hard on that and actual met all the needs within the City last year.</p>

<p>3. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member for Transport agree that it was a mistake to switch off all the speed cameras, in view of the widespread condemnation of this action by the public and the police, in view of the fact that the number of vehicles speeding has shot up in some places and the fact that the majority of police NAGs have chosen speeding as one of their top 3 concerns?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT</p> <p>I regret that, after 13 years of a Labour government, the country has been left with a debt of £950,000,000,000 that has put the County Council spending programmes under severe strain. With this in mind, it has become necessary for us to focus our spending on our core responsibilities, and on the “at risk” in our Community – i.e. the elderly and children. Speed Enforcement is NOT one of our duties, but I trust that Cllr Pressel will remind the police NAGs on whose shoulders this duty does lie.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Since that level of debt quoted here is about the same as at the end of the Tories last period in office and is proportionately the lowest debt of the GE7 countries and since each serious accident costs about £1m surely the Cabinet must admit that the decision to withdraw the money for speed cameras from the so called Thames Valley Partnership was a stupid one which puts money above people’s safety. Also we are increasing the national debt by not allowing money from fines to go to government.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I don’t.</p>

<p>4. COUNCILLOR ROZ SMITH</p> <p>What does the County Council do to raise awareness in local residents of illegal loan sharking?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JUDITH HEATHCOAT, CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES</p> <p>You have been sent of a copy of the report which went to the Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on 6 September 2010, and which I think answers your question.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Thank you to the officers for highlighting the report that was sent to the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, The report mentions that often the activities of the loan sharks are invisible. What worries me is that in Section 10 of this report it mentions that the team doesn't make known any detail of on-going investigations. Would the Cabinet Member agree it might be useful to involve the Local Members with regard to some of the investigations on loan sharks because we actually have quite a lot of local knowledge with regard to loan shark in our area?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Thank you for your question. I asked the officer to send you the paper so that you could see the work that has actually been undertaken. For other Councillors, Chairman, this report is actually just the beginning and it is an on-going report and it is obviously going to grow. It is going to draw more detail in and it is going to be presented to Scrutiny on a regular basis so that information and data can be drawn out. This actually comes back to your question about sharing with local members. We have to be slightly careful because obviously with loan sharks and the work that is being done, it is work that is done with Trading Standards and the Police and certain parts of any investigation have to be kept discreet because of what is happening. If you know of anything that is happening in your division, advise Trading Standards and they can take it from there. But with the publicity on loan sharks, and information on this particular project, going round to so many places I think that hopefully the loan sharks will be shy of coming to Oxfordshire.</p>

<p>5. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Would the portfolio holder accept my congratulations for scrapping the ill-thought out Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) for the Magdalen Road area in Oxford? Does he now regret Cllr Hudspeth wasting £350,000 of taxpayer's money on preparations for the ill-fated CPZ? What comfort can he now give residents in East Oxford who remain plagued by inconsiderate parking?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT</p> <p>I regret that, after 13 years of a Labour government, the country has been left with a debt of £950,000,000,000 that has put the capital programme on hold until confirmation of funding has been established. I would like to congratulate Cllr Hudspeth for the work that he has put in to this project along with the officers involved. Most importantly, I would thank him for listening to the concerns of the residents in the area to achieve the best solution possible. I note that Cllr Tanner always agrees with residents parking yet has done nothing to progress this scheme for the benefit of his constituents.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would Councillor Rose, agree with me that the National Debt, and I don't understand why this has come into it, the National Debt as a percentage of GDP s Britains is actually the lowest of the G7 countries. Would he agree with that and would he tell me how he can explain to the people of my division why it is sensible in an era when we are making cuts to spend – well if you include, not just Magdalen Road but the Divinity Road CPZ something like £0.5 million, on preparations which we are not now able to take forward – how will he explain to local people that that is a good use of money?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Cllr Rose responding to the first supplementary question - OK if you would like an answer on the percentage of GPP basically it was just observing where Gordon Brown has left us and I am sure the rest of the electorate in this country agree with me.</p>

<p>6. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Would the portfolio holder agree with me that the 25 year contract with Viridor for a waste incinerator at Ardley is ill-advised? Does he agree that the £25 million a year contract is poor value for money, that the incinerator will be a blot on the Oxfordshire countryside and that our county will be a dustbin for other people's rubbish for years to come?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCUTURE</p> <p>I find it sad that only now after 13 years of a Labour government that has left the country with a debt of £950,000,000,000 that Labour are taking into account financial issues. However, I would like to reassure Councillor Tanner that this deal represents excellent value for money for the residents of Oxfordshire and is far better than throwing rubbish into the ground to rot and produce methane which is a powerful greenhouse gas, and also then having to pay additional landfill taxes of at least £8,000,000 pa. I know that Cllr Tanner approves of wind turbines that are 30% taller with a span of at least 50m each that will be a blot on the landscape of Oxfordshire and are causing concern for air traffic control at Brize Norton and Benson, so I fail to see how we can say the same for one single tower. He also has failed to grasp that there is currently 250,000 tonnes of commercial waste that goes to Ardley and not all of this comes from Oxfordshire. This waste is simply thrown into the ground to rot so if some of it could be directed to any surplus capacity at the proposed plant, this would bring even more environmental benefits. There is no need to import more waste from other areas. Of course the tax payers of Oxfordshire will benefit in an excess profit share of any of the commercial waste disposed of at the Energy from Waste facility, proving even better value for money.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I clearly disagree about some of the figures but can I take his remark that there is no need to import more waste from other areas as a commitment that if and when the incinerator goes ahead there will be no importation of waste from outside of the County?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Now regarding this situation, I said in the answer 250,000 tonnes of commercial waste and industrial waste were already coming into Ardley, some of it is not from within the County. Now Cllr Tanner is making these wild accusations about we are going to become the dustbin but actually it isn't we were already have 250,000 tonnes of waste coming into Ardley from across county plus the 600,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste in the county that has to be disposed of and we have to find a solution to that otherwise that waste is simply going to go into the ground to rot so I think in answer to that question it's quite simple there is already some importation, that overall the capacity of 300,000 will be adequately supplied from within Oxfordshire and the benefit to the residents of Oxfordshire is off course any additional income and excess profit because it will come back in the contract that we have hammered out with Viridor.</p>

<p>7. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Does the leader now regret sending an e-mail on 3rd July, copied to me, which said: 'With regard to the Playbuilder Funding, these schemes have been extraordinarily fortunate in that they were formally committed just days before the Chancellor's axe fell and they will, therefore, proceed. This is not based on any specific preference or merit; simply that we said we would fund them and we keep to our word'.</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KEITH MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>My e-mail was based on the facts as they were known at the time this issue was first raised. It subsequently transpired that the Department was minded to withhold grant for schemes that were formally committed but where work had not started. I do regret the disappointment this will have caused to those organisations expecting to benefit from these schemes. However, my real regret is that the last government so mired this country in debt to the tune of a trillion pounds (which is a pound sign followed by a one followed by twelve zeros) that the current government is having to resort to draconian measures to bring our country's financial position back to one that is not threatened by the intervention of the International Monetary Fund.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>My question to Cllr Mitchell is simply this one – does he have any further information about the Playbuilder Funding and can he let us know what it is?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Only that our officers are working with the Department of Education officials to persuade them to support these schemes but I have no response beyond that.</p>
<p>8. COUNCILLOR JOHN TANNER</p> <p>Is the £47,000 Playbuilder funding for the South Oxford Adventure Playground still on hold? What advice can you offer the parents and children who use the playground? Do you think that Cllr Mitchell should keep his word?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR LOUISE CHAPMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES</p> <p>At the time of writing we're still awaiting an announcement from the DfE about the outcomes of the national review on the Play Pathfinder programme.</p> <p>An updated 'grant finder' sheet, which will include information about other potential funding opportunities, tailored for all sites, has been prepared which will be sent out once the news is confirmed. Cllr Mitchell's commitment was given, in good faith, before the DfE's change of heart in relation to funding these projects so I do not believe that he should keep his word.</p>

<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Would Cllr Chapman accept my thanks for her not mentioning the 'evil doings' of the Labour Government and the national debt?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>All I can say Chairman on this matter is that we are where we are and we know who is responsible for the position this country finds itself in and I think I have answered the question quite fully.</p>
<p>9. COUNCILLOR DAVID NIMMO-SMITH</p> <p>Is the Cabinet Member aware of the work done in, for example, Norfolk, on using strategic tree-planting to enhance speed compliance?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT</p> <p>Yes we are aware of this work and are obtaining more information from Norfolk about the pros and cons. However, the reduced speeds measured by Norfolk seem relatively minimal and in my opinion wouldn't compensate for the additional hazard of the trees.</p> <p>The only site in Oxfordshire where we have such trees is the memorial on the A44 London Road just east of Chipping Norton. While thankfully there have been no accidents in recent years, looking back over the longer term shows an unusually high proportion of fatal and serious injuries where vehicles have left the carriageway and hit a tree.</p>
<p>10. COUNCILLOR CHARLES MATHEW</p> <p>Has the cabinet member for G & I had a reply from Greg Clarke MP regarding Minerals & Waste?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR IAN HUDSPETH, CABINET MEMBER FOR GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>No response has been received yet.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Chairman – If Councillor Mathew writes to you with a supplementary would you please answer it?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I certainly will, and as soon as I receive a reply from Greg Clarke I will let Council members know.</p>
<p>11. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>The new government has allocated the responsibility of chairing the select committees to members of the three main</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KEITH MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>According to the County Council Constitution, the allocation of places to Scrutiny Committees is for the Council to decide and the election of the Chairman of each Scrutiny Committee is for the members of each Scrutiny Committee so appointed. It would therefore be for members of Scrutiny Committees to reconsider their Chairman and the Cabinet has no role</p>

<p>parties, according to the numbers of seats they hold. While this is not as good as allowing the opposition to chair them all, it is still better practice than allowing the administration to hog all the chairs, as this Council so shamefully does in the case of our scrutiny committees. Will the Cabinet now think again?</p>	<p>in this process.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Does our so called Leader agree that it is very sad that he and the Cabinet are unwilling or is it unable to show leadership on this important issue? That is why I said I don't see him as altogether as a leader.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>Chairman I am Leader of the Council because I am Leader of my group and this Council works under the direction of 52 members who are elected in my group and working in constant partnership with the remaining small group of members who are not in our group, but we are the controlling administration. We take the policy decision, I represent them here. Our members will be Chairman of scrutiny committees that is a clear decision of our group. I don't have any problem with that. That is democracy and that is how it works.</p>
<p>12. COUNCILLOR SUSANNA PRESSEL</p> <p>Research has clearly and conclusively shown that people are far more likely to drive to work if they have a free parking space when they arrive. In view of the fact that other Councils, including Bristol, York and Leeds, have recently expressed an interest in charging employers who offer workplace parking, will the Cabinet Member for Transport now agree to investigate this?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT</p> <p>The only council with firm plans to introduce a workplace parking charge is Nottingham. Having spoken directly with them, it is clear that the costs involved in developing such a scheme are huge. In the current economic climate I consider this to be unrealistic.</p>

<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Since this workplace parking and charges is the best way to reduce congestion and pollution, and since the cost will be much less for those councils which come after the courageous pioneer – Nottingham – and since this is clearly an invest to save scheme will the Cabinet promise to reconsider this issue soon.</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I do not accept the statement that this is the best way of saving money or reducing congestion just on the advice of one member when my professionals advise so differently. So the answer is no.</p>
<p>13. COUNCILLOR JOHN SANDERS</p> <p>The South East England Development agency estimates that, as a result of government cuts, the region could lose 74,000 public sector and 33,000 private sector jobs in the next 5-6 years. Total new cases of personal insolvencies in Oxfordshire rose by 20% between 2008-2009 and this government's policies mean that the figures for 2009-2010 are likely to be worse. All these people and others will need advice centres like never before. In light of these cuts to be imposed on the country's economy that will, in particular, hit disadvantaged families, children and old people, thereby transferring further burdens on the Council in unpaid</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES</p> <p>The provision of information and advice is an essential part of our strategy to transform adult social care. However, given the scale of the financial challenges that the Council faces it is inevitable that we must review all areas of spending to ensure that they are being used effectively and efficiently. Any proposals will be considered as part of the Council's Service and Resource Planning process. It is important to remember that the Government will not be publishing its Spending Review until 20th October and that the detailed financial information for local government will not be available until late November or early December.</p>

<p>Council Tax, child care, adult social care etc., what measures will the Cabinet Member for Finance take to maintain or even improve the Council's grants to advice centres in the coming years?</p>	
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Councillor Fatemian seems to want to ignore the valuable financial contribution that advice centres make to protect council tax payments and to save council social care and children's services costs by keeping families together. These savings will be made whatever happens in the governments spending review. There is no need to postpone generous support by the Council as it will reap greater benefits in the same financial year. In the light of Councillor Fatemian's reply is he really prepared to punish vulnerable families rather than to save costs?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I don't agree that that is the case. It is not a decision to punish vulnerable families and as it clearly says there any proposals will be considered as part of the planning and resource process.</p>
<p>14. COUNCILLOR JOHN SANDERS</p> <p>In light of the Council's premature withdrawal from the Thames Valley Road Safety Partnership will the Cabinet Member for Transport accept responsibility for</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR RODNEY ROSE, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT</p> <p>I accept that responsibility of a debt of £950,000,000,000 to the country lies squarely with a failed Labour government after 13 years of mismanagement. This has meant that the Liberal/Conservative coalition has had to take some difficult decisions to reduce the deficit, which includes reducing the funding to the County Council for the Safer Roads partnership. The Council carries out a wide range of activities to promote road safety, as summarised in</p>

<p>the inevitable increase in deaths and injuries on our roads?</p>	<p>the annual report on road casualties in Oxfordshire recently circulated to all members. Our objective remains to achieve the best possible improvements in road safety within the resources currently available.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>Interestingly the level of net public sector debt as a proportion of GDPs is roughly the same as it was at the end of the last Conservative Government nevertheless I am not surprised that Councillor Rose wants to blame someone else. At what stage will the rise of road traffic deaths and injuries force him to rethink the policy?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>It is still the core responsibility of Thames Valley Police to enforce and keep speeds at a sensible level so I don't really see why he is asking me that question it should be addressed to the Chief Constable of Police.</p>
<p>15. COUNCILLOR JOHN SANDERS</p> <p>Does the Cabinet member for Police and Policy Coordination agree that ASBO's have had a real impact in driving down anti-social behaviour in Oxfordshire and, in particular, in Rose Hill?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KIERON MALLON, CABINET MEMBER FOR POLICE & POLICY CO-ORDINATION</p> <p>I believe that Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have had a significant impact on reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Oxfordshire. ASBOs are civil orders which prohibit individuals from behaving in an anti-social manner and protect a community when all other measures (eg: injunctions, acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs)) have not been successful in curtailing the anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>An ASBO consists of a series of conditions designed to stop certain behaviours. Conditions of an ASBO may include exclusions from certain areas, curfews, prohibit threatening or violent behaviour, prohibit use of intimidating language and prohibit drunkenness in a public place, for example. These conditions are put in place to tackle the triggers of the anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Once an ASBO is in place, partner agencies continue to work with individuals to bring about positive change in their behaviour. ASBOs are designed to be long term solutions. Anyone breaching an ASBO commits a criminal offence and is dealt with accordingly. ASBOs therefore bring a halt to certain behaviours which previously would have been left unchecked.</p>

	<p>To date, in Rose Hill, there have been four people with ASBOs which expired in June 2009. These have had successful outcomes, in that the community once again has regained control of their lives where previously they felt intimidated, to the extent that some residents could not leave their homes.</p> <p>At present, there is one person with a current ASBO in Rose Hill. From an Oxford City point of view, ASBOs have definitely had an impact in reducing ASB in communities which have been suffering at the hands of these perpetrators.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>I am really very pleased that Councillor Mallon's supports the retention of ASBOs as a way to keep down crime. If the Government decides to abandon the measure will he still support ASBOs?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>It seems to be working so far in the area that Cllr Sanders is particularly interested in, in particular and generally in Oxfordshire. The Police Authority, the Safer Community Partnerships are all inundated with data every meeting; they go through that data at great length to sort out what the priorities will be. They will then feed back into government to give their views on schemes such as this. As I said recently at a Police Authority meeting where I was accused of not implementing policy, I should implement policy. I have implemented policy over the last 13 years that I have not necessarily agreed with but as a democratically elected member I will do my duty. So we will watch this space with interest Chairman, and the Police Authority are feeding back to Government every week. Our own Chief Constable had a meeting about a month ago when all Chief Constables from England were invited and they put their points through primarily to the government minister. Watch this space.</p>
<p>16. COUNCILLOR ROY DARKE</p> <p>In asking the population of Oxfordshire to meet the budget challenge in his introduction to the latest Oxon News, Councillor Mitchell says that there will be "some short term pain" and that "our savings targets over four years will be approximately £200 million rather than £100 million" (p.3., Oxon News, Issue 25) . Will he now acknowledge that this pain is being caused directly by the</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KEITH MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>Gordon Brown's government had planned for 20% cuts in public spending but had failed to advise the public of this before the General Election. The Liberal-Conservative coalition, having had a good look at the country's accounts and having discovered a debt mountain of one trillion pounds (£1,000,000,000,000), has made a modest increase to the very large spending cuts that Labour had already planned and that are so necessary if this country is to get off its knees.</p> <p>Cuts in capital spending are simply those that Gordon Brown's government had already planned for in their budget but, again, had not felt it necessary to advise the public before a General Election.</p> <p>For those who wonder how Gordon Brown's government managed to clock up a national debt of a trillion pounds, look at the Treasury Spending Review document . In every year</p>

<p>coalition government and that the excessive speed with which they are dealing with the deficit is likely to push the country back into recession and place extreme and unnecessary pressure on public services in Oxfordshire?</p>	<p>since 2001, Gordon Brown's government was spending more than it was earning. The world-wide recession and the banking crisis may have widened the gap but it had been yawning wide since 2001, long before these events happened. Gordon Brown cannot escape the consequences of his service, first as chancellor then as prime minister.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>My question is about Councillor Mitchell's statement in Oxon News recently that there is some short term pain. Do I take it from that Councillor Mitchell that at the end of the 4 year period of this budget that we will return service, particularly front line services to the levels of quality and service that they are now and have been in the past?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>I wouldn't like to make any predictions about the length of the economic cycle, Chairman. We are in one of the worst positions I think this Country has been in since I guess the end of the Second World War. I think it could take longer than 4 or 5 years for us to come through and to see the cycle reverse and there be growth in spending again. We have had 10 years of spending under the last Government; spending that we had to borrow to finance for almost all of those 10 years and because this takes a long time to turn around we are still at the moment as a new Government spending £4 for every £3 that we receive. We cannot go on like that; we have got to correct that structural deficit. I don't know how long it will take but I think it might be nearer to 10 years than 4 or 5. I know that is sad, and I hope it isn't, but I think we should be very straight with people that we have a very difficult financial position not just because of the debt but because of the inbuilt structural deficit that this last Government maintained without telling people openly and honestly. It is that that we have to get rid of and it is that that is going to take time for the current coalition Government to correct.</p>
<p>17. COUNCILLOR ROY DARKE</p> <p>Given the regressive impact of the measures proposed in the coalition Government's first budget, as shown by the recent IFS report (which used the Chancellor's own methodology), will the Leader commit to ensuring that further local budget measures proposed by the Conservative administration in Oxfordshire are actively designed to ensure that</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR KEITH MITCHELL, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>I reject the accusation that the coalition's budget proposals are regressive. Given the scale of the cuts we are facing to contribute to the necessary reduction in the mountain of debt created by the last government, I do not feel able to give any assurances until the outcome of the Spending Review 2010 and the subsequent Local Government Settlement. This Administration will seek to meet the needs of all of Oxfordshire's citizens and to balance those of the most vulnerable against the rest of the population. All members of this Council have a role to bring the needs of their constituents into the budget deliberations. Scrutiny members have an important role in providing advice on the budget and Cabinet members will welcome all of this input into the budget process. Of course, the final budget will be the responsibility of all 74 members to set a valid budget that best meets the needs of all of</p>

<p>local services are targeted at those in greatest need and suffering the deepest economic and social deprivation in the county. In addition, will he take the advice of IFS and other national bodies who suggest that all future budget proposals are evaluated in terms of reducing economic and social equality in the County?</p>	<p>Oxfordshire's residents.</p>
<p>SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION</p> <p>This is about whether the June budget was regressive or progressive and we will no doubt discuss this later on in the agenda. In relation to my specific question I mentioned the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Given that the current Chancellor very frequently referred to IFS advice when his Party was in opposition and given that the June budget has been shown comprehensively by the IFS in the paper by Brian Lovall to have been regressive I would really like to know why he is not accepting the well focused and well analysed IFS studies or the recent nature of the June budget?</p>	<p>SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER</p> <p>The question was around, I think, the willingness of this Council to tie itself to external validation of what it is doing. We are tied to all sorts of constraints, we have been for donkey's years. I want to inform the members of this Council to decide what the right budget is and how we strike the right balances between the vulnerable and the needs of all. That is a difficult enough question. So the implication of the original question and I think the supplementary that we in some way tie ourselves to external agencies to validate what we are doing, to give us our instructions, to tie our hands, is one that I don't accept. I think our judgement as a local councillor is what matters here and our judgement about the relative priorities of our services and the needs of our people is one that the 74 members of this council are well able to meet. So I am not willing to look at external bodies. Others can do that if they wish and I would rather see the evidence of a quite a few before I make up my own mind finally as to which one of them is right. So this Council with 74 members will set the budget, will determine the priorities and there is a very well established process in the constitution for us to do that.</p>
<p>18. COUNCILLOR SAJ MALIK</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement confirm the numbers of school admissions</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR MICHAEL WAINE, CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>The council is only responsible for admissions appeals for places at community and voluntary controlled schools; schools which are their own admissions authority (aided, trust, foundation and academy) are responsible for organising their own admissions appeals. The total</p>

<p>appeals this year per school in the county? Can he also confirm whether those figures are higher or lower than in previous years and does he consider the process for schools admissions to be best serving the people of Oxfordshire and in particular the people of East Oxford?</p>	<p>number of admissions appeals heard on behalf of community and controlled schools between 1st September 2009 and 31st August 2010 was 542 compared with 389 in the same period last year. This is an increase of 153 (or 39.3% if you prefer).</p> <p>Despite an increase in the total number of applications for school places (primary up from 7047 to 7324 and secondary from 6380 to 6497, a total increase of 277 for primary and 117 for secondary), the total number of first preferences met increased from 6422 to 6593 for primary schools and from 5838 to 5860 for secondaries, a success rate of over 90% overall (90.02% for primary and 90.2% for secondary - with 91.85% of Oxfordshire residents gaining a place at their first preference secondary school). The percentage of families which received an offer of a school place at one of their three preferred schools was nearly 97% for primary schools and over 98% for secondaries (with 98½% of those families living in Oxfordshire gaining a place at a secondary school which they listed as a first, second or third preference).</p> <p>So, yes, I believe the people of Oxfordshire, including East Oxford, are best served by the admissions process.</p>
<p>19. COUNCILLOR SARAH HUTCHINSON</p> <p>Recent research by Age UK reveals that people over 65 are twice as likely as other age groups to spend over 21 hours of every day alone. The Charity has also found that 1.2 million people in the UK over the age of fifty are 'severely excluded' from their communities.</p> <p>Given the severe affect that emotional and social isolation can have on our mental and physical health, will the Cabinet Member for Adult Services commit to ensuring that this epidemic of loneliness, particularly as it relates to Oxfordshire's elderly</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ARASH FATEMIAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES</p> <p>The Council recognises the impact of emotional and social isolation on older people's well-being and the important role of communities and services in providing support to local people.</p> <p>This is reflected in Social and Community Services vision statement which states: 'We will support and promote strong communities so that people live their lives as successfully and independently as possible'. This is strongly reinforced in 'Ageing Successfully,' our partnership strategy developed with the Primary Care Trust and with other organisations such as Age UK Oxfordshire, which promotes Oxfordshire as a place where older people thrive and feel empowered to live life as they want, controlling for themselves any support they need.</p> <p>'Ageing Successfully' is based on a belief that a strong local identity and sense of place provides older residents with the best possible chance of health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Work to implement the strategy recognizes the importance of creating 'lifetime neighbourhoods' which offer an accessible and inclusive environment for an ageing population. The focus is on better health and well-being for older people achieved through preventative, practical and self help services and support to prevent decline, help to achieve the maximum income and access to leisure, transport and social opportunities.</p>

residents, is at the centre of the Council's approach to service delivery?

Specific service developments are aimed at reducing the social isolation and loneliness that some older people will experience. Examples included: the Turnaround Project which aims to identify people who may be on a pathway towards high dependency and residential care and are offered early, appropriate support; an extension of the Good Neighbour Schemes (GNS), which are local voluntary groups offering a service for those in need of help and support. GNS offer support which cannot be supplied through Social Care, Health and/or other professional care agencies for example: befriending, collecting prescriptions, transport for appointments and minor household tasks. Other service developments include innovative day opportunities, dementia cafes, and an Adult Mobile Services Centre to address the needs of those in rural areas. In addition, we support preventative services to either improve the health of older people (such as through exercise classes) or to improve their skills such as through students providing IT training to older people.

The local Oxfordshire picture does not necessarily reflect the national research undertaken by Age UK. The last census identified the number of older people living alone in the County as 31,000 of the then population of just fewer than 88,000, which equates to 35%, aged 65+. This ranks Oxfordshire as the 124th lowest rate of 152 reporting authorities. However, the Council is not complacent. Hence, the Council's strong commitment to implementing 'Ageing Successfully' and all the associated projects to alleviate loneliness.

The Council also supports local communities to provide local services such as day services that people can directly access (rather than needing to be referred by Adult Social Care). Each year we have to report on the number of people accessing these services. Oxfordshire's figure of people supported has increased over the last 3 years. The latest comparative figures available are from 2008/9 which shows that in a sample week 2,495 older people in Oxfordshire accessed these services. This equates to a rate of 265 people per 10,000 population over 65. This compares to a national average of 212 people per 10,000 population – or 25% more people receiving this service.

Our commitment to working on the issues of isolation and loneliness in older people is further demonstrated by the Council bid to the National Institute of Health Research. This will fund an 18 month research project on social isolation and loneliness in older people. The bid was developed in collaboration with Age UK and Brunel University and we anticipate hearing whether we have been successful in October.

The Council's remains commitment to promoting the health and well being and reducing the social isolation that an ageing population may experience. As a result, 'Ageing Successfully' continues to be a high priority and is central to the delivery of support and approaches that

	reduce the experience of loneliness of Oxfordshire's older residents.
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