

COUNTY COUNCIL – 25 March 2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Questioner's name: Bill Waddell	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>In a request under the Freedom of Information Act (Ref 15/FOI/9404) concerning the Shared Spaces scheme at the Kimbrose Triangle, I requested to know when, and the reasons why, several safety recommendations of the Road Safety Audit team seem to have been ignored by the Highways Department.</p> <p>These recommendations were particularly pertinent to the safety of pedestrians with disabilities, especially the blind and partially sighted. The decision to ignore these safety recommendations goes against the current advice from the Department of Transport in their document LTN 1/11 Shared Space and Manual for Streets and summarised in the document <i>Access for Blind People in Towns (SS1401)</i> published by the <i>National Federation for the Blind UK</i>.</p> <p>The response to my request stated that Gloucestershire County Council does not hold the information about why and when decisions to ignore these safety recommendations had been made, and that the Safety Audit team have no authority to insist that their recommendations are followed.</p> <p>I would like to raise the following questions at the next Full Council meeting:</p> <p>i) Does the County Council believe it acceptable that no audit trail exists for decisions which could affect the safety of its citizens, especially vulnerable pedestrians?</p> <p>ii) Is it Council policy not to keep audit trails? Or is this a one off</p>	<p>The design of the Kimbrose Triangle shared space scheme was a partnership between Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and our contractor at the time Atkins. It is normal practice for GCC to hold information around the different stages of the design process, although in this instance a review of the scheme files from 2009 when the scheme was developed has not revealed the engineer's decision making processes or audit trail around the comments made by the safety audit team. This was made clear in the response to the FOI request.</p> <p>Unfortunately the GCC officers involved in the scheme have either since retired or left the employment of GCC.</p> <p>A full public consultation on the Kimbrose scheme was undertaken and any comments or concerns about the scheme were taken into account when producing the final designs. The designs complied with published standards at the time.</p> <p>The Kimbrose shared space scheme has been closely monitored since its construction. Although there have been no serious accidents, concerns about the ability of pedestrians to safely cross have led to a decision to include a zebra style crossing. Following a public consultation officers are now working on the final designs for this crossing. Officers have been in correspondence and consultation with members of the public and representatives of the Royal National Institute of the Blind to ensure that the design work meets the requirements of vulnerable users as much as possible and that all safety standards are met.</p>

occurrence?

iii) Can the Council give an assurance that an audit trail is mandated for all future safety decisions made by Council departments.

iv) Can the Council give an assurance that the advice given by the DfT and the NFB document referred to above is followed in future developments at Kimbrose Triangle and all other future developments involving Shared Spaces.