Stephen Barclay: Yes. To date, £1.5 million has been spent on two studies, neither of which cost what the scheme actually needs.

Neil Darwin: Indeed, yes.

Stephen Barclay: So you accept that?

Neil Darwin: Yes, absolutely.

Stephen Barclay: Given that you are responsible for spending some of that money, why do you think that is acceptable?

Neil Darwin: Again, I spoke to (*redacted name*) on the way over. He called me to say that they will be bringing forward proposals for your first question to us in the 15 questions. We are reliant on the county to bring that work to us. We do not generate the work.

Stephen Barclay: That is very welcome, but that is an answer to a different question. The question was: you have spent a proportion, not the whole lot but you have contributed a proportion, of £1.5 million on work that is flawed. Have you asked for that money back?

Neil Darwin: Not at this stage because we are awaiting further news from the county council.

Stephen Barclay: Right. So why have you paid for a piece of work that was so flawed, that did something, half-barrier crossings, that Network Rail tells me was never acceptable, legally is not doable, and is deeply flawed? Why did you spend money on a flawed study?

Neil Darwin: Because the project brief specification was brought to us by the county council.

Stephen Barclay: So that is the county council's fault then?

Neil Darwin: A collective involvement, but they are the ones who drafted the work.

Stephen Barclay: Collective involvement, so who else? It is the county council's fault; who else's fault?

Neil Darwin: With us because we are funding the work, of course, which is what you are driving at, but the county council would have specified what was needed and, again, we would make the same observation you have made, which is why we need to refer the piece of work.

Stephen Barclay: When did you realise that you had made this flaw?

Neil Darwin: When you and I sat next to each other down in Portcullis House.

Stephen Barclay: February 2016?

Neil Darwin: Yes. We have not seen anything since.

Stephen Barclay: You realised that this error was there in 2016 that we did not actually have an accurate business case?

Neil Darwin: Yes.

Stephen Barclay: Yet we are now January 2017, a year later, and we still do not have a—

Neil Darwin: We have not had anything further, yes, correct.

Stephen Barclay: A year has passed. We still do not have an accurate business case on this absolutely critical scheme. Why have we had a further year's

delay?

Neil Darwin: Because we have been chasing the county council.

Stephen Barclay: You have been chasing the county council for a year. It sounds like you are in close touch with *(redacted name)*; you spoke to him this morning. Presumably, over the last year you have been speaking to him lots of times. You have been saying to him, "*(redacted name)*, come on, where is that at?"

Neil Darwin: Indeed, yes. Yes, absolutely.

Stephen Barclay: "Where is it?"

Neil Darwin: Yes.

Stephen Barclay: For a whole year?

Neil Darwin: Yes.

Stephen Barclay: *(redacted name)* has been ignoring you then?

Neil Darwin: Yes, absolutely, but you will be pleased to learn—and again you will have the same healthy distrust of this as I do—*(redacted name)* and his team will be able to deliver the extra piece of work next week.

Stephen Barclay: *(redacted name)* has been ignoring the representations of the LEP for a year.

Mark Reeve: I think ignoring is probably strong. I have not seen the correspondence, I am not into the detail at all here, Stephen, but—

Stephen Barclay: Well, Neil just said yes so—

Mark Reeve: Oh, okay.

Stephen Barclay: For a year, but now that I have raised it we can manage to produce it in a week?

Neil Darwin: Absolutely.

Mark Reeve: It appears so.