

Council Briefing Note

Date: **Monday 13 April 2015**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

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This briefing note forms part of the Council agenda papers and should be read alongside these.

Agenda items are only included in this Briefing Note where there are papers not included in the main agenda pack

	Pages
16 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL	3 - 18
Questions on notice received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.9(b).	
Full details of all questions and written responses are attached.	
17 PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT DO NOT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING	19 - 36
Public addresses and questions to the Leader or other Board member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.10 and 11.11 and where the full text of the address or question was received by the Head of Law and Governance by 5.00 pm on Tuesday 7 April 2015.	
Full details of addresses are attached.	
Addresses by: Jane Alexander Nigel Gibson Chaka Artwell	
Question from: Sarah Lasenby	
20 MOTIONS ON NOTICE	37 - 44
Motions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.16.	
The full text of motions received by the deadline of 1.00pm on Monday 30 March 2015, and substantive amendments received by the Head of Law and Governance before publication are attached.	

OXFORD CITY FULL COUNCIL MEETING 13 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM 16: QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Board member for Educational Attainment and Youth Ambition (Councillor Pat Kennedy)

1. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Kennedy

In considering recent reports into educational attainment in Oxford, will the leader accept that at KS1 and KS2 Oxford city had the lowest %s of pupils reaching expected attainment in the county in both 2013 and 2014 despite progress being made with only reading not being worst in county, as paragraphs 1 and 2 of the document "School Performance 2013-14" shows; that the aggregate data for the city masks considerable differences and that in fact the spread between best and worst outcomes in progression is far worse than the average would suggest?

Response

I should like to thank Councillor Gant for again raising the issue of poor performance of primary schools in the city. However, the schools which we supported made substantial improvements. Between 2012 and 2014, the schools which followed our education attainment programme saw a 10 percentage point increase in the number of children achieving level 2 in reading, writing and maths at age 7, from 65 to 75%. This contrasts with a 4 percentage point increase across Oxfordshire primaries. And the same schools saw a 4 percentage point increase in level 4 in reading, writing and maths at age 11, from 59 to 63%, as against a single percentage point increase across the county. This indicates that educational attainment in the most disadvantaged schools in the city can be raised by consistent and appropriate teaching methods. We hope that these improvements will provide a sound basis for bringing the performance of these schools closer to the county wide average.

We understand that the County Council is reviewing its role in supporting educational attainment, and we are committed to working with county colleagues and teachers to realise the educational potential of children in city schools.

Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration (Councillor Scott Seamons)

2. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Seamons

I am sure that we all applaud the installation of solar pv on Council housing stock, to reduce carbon emissions and reduce tenants' electricity bills. Can the Board member tell Council how the benefits can be shared out among those tenants who do not yet have any such panels or other source of renewable energy for their homes?

Response

There is no practical way that tenants who do not have PV or other renewables installed directly benefit from those who have. However, as PV's represent an investment by the HRA the resultant income directly received by the Council will benefit the HRA in the longer term and will be used for the benefit of all tenants.

Our approach as outlined in the Housing Asset Strategy and being further developed in the Energy Strategy is that we will be setting a minimum SAP (energy efficiency) level that all council houses will achieve, and setting up works programmes to achieve this with the funding we have available from the council.

While renewables will play an important part in this approach we will also be installing more traditional measures such as roof and wall insulation and the installation of A rated boilers and heating system upgrades to meet the minimum SAP target. This will ensure that we address fuel poverty issue for all our tenants.

This is done in recognition of the fact that not all houses and flats are suitable for the installation of PV or other renewables and allows us to assess the most cost effective way of achieving the minimum SAP target across the council stock.

As part of our approach we will also be maximising the use of external energy funding wherever this is available which will supplement the budgets we already have.

The Energy Strategy currently being drafted from following detailed analysis of our stock will be presented for approval later this year.

3. From Councillor Hollick to Councillor Seamons

Why has the Council not topped up the amount for Discretionary Housing Payments after the Government cut funding – even though they are permitted to do so up to a maximum of 2.5x the Government grant level?

Response

The Council's government contribution for DHP funding has reduced from £515k in 2014/15, to £288k for 2015/16. The Council is increasing the funding available for DHP's by providing an additional amount of £150k from Homelessness Prevention Funding, and £80k from the HRA, which makes a

total of £518k. This significantly exceeds the DHP expenditure for 2014/15 of £462k, and so should be more than sufficient.

The Council's policy in respect of awarding DHP's is to ensure that recipients have a long term plan in place, which will mean that DHP's are only required for a short period. The Council's Welfare Reform Team are available to support people to do this, by helping them overcome barriers to employment, to get help with their debts and to find more affordable accommodation. In 2014/15 62 customers were helped into work. The Council's policy in respect of awarding DHP is to ensure that recipients have a long term plan in place so that DHP is only required for as short a period as practicable. The Welfare Reform Team is available to provide support, to help overcome barriers to getting a job, helping with debt issues and finding affordable accommodation. During 2014/15, we helped 62 people to find work.

The current government intend to reduce the government contribution to DHP's further. As such it is important that customers are supported to find long term solutions, as only providing financial support is not sustainable in the long run. Significant promotion of DHP's was undertaken in the last financial year to ensure that expenditure was maximised. We worked closely with a wide range of organisations across the city to ensure those in need of support were able to access it.

In 2014/15 295 applications were turned down out of 1,310 received. The reasons for refusal are summarised in the table below. Even when someone is refused a DHP, other types of support are still available from the Welfare Reform team, and this is always offered.

4. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Seamons

How many sites for residential development does the collegiate University own which have been allocated in the Sites and Housing Plan, and how many homes could these sites approximately deliver.

Response

There are 12 sites with a potential to deliver in the order of 610 dwellings. See full break down in the table below

Sites and Housing Policy	Site	Owner	Capacity (dwellings) SHLAA Dec 2014
SP1	Avis site	Christ Church College	12
SP2	Banbury Road Sites	University of Oxford	42
SP9	Court Place Gardens	University of Oxford	46
SP14	Diamond Place and Ewert House	University of Oxford (part) remainder Oxford City Council	100
SP17	Faculty of Music	University of Oxford	19 (or 100 student rooms)

SP22	Jesus College Sports Ground	Jesus College	24
SP27	Land off Manor Place	Merton College	40 (or 200 student rooms)
SP28	Lincoln College Sports Ground	Lincoln College	112
SP40	Oriel College land at Edward St and High St	Oriel College	7
SP53	Summertown House	University of Oxford	5
SP61	West Wellington Square	University of Oxford	13
SP63	Wolvercote Paper Mill	University of Oxford	190
		TOTAL DWELLINGS	610

5. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Seamons

How many residential homes (broken down as market rate/affordable/social) on sites owned by the collegiate University have been granted permission but have not commenced yet?

Response

From the initial analysis that officers have made it would appear that there are no such sites which have been granted permission but upon which work has yet to commence.

6. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Seamons

I am aware that some letting agents are asking students to submit sealed bids on how much rent they are prepared to pay for the 2015/6 academic year?

Response

The City Council is not aware this practice is happening in the city's network of accredited agents, and officers would welcome any information or intelligence it can use to investigate such matters in collaboration with its partners.

City Council Officers have made proactive enquiries on behalf of the Councillor to some of the City's larger letting agents who deal with students, and they are not aware of students who have come to them having experienced this behaviour.

The housing market in Oxford is such that the high demand for property and accommodation creates a situation where some landlords and agents may seek to take advantage financially of this situation.

Regulation and controls do help to ensure standards are maintained, and although City Council has very limited powers to deal with issues such as this, partners such as Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards team do, and may be able to assist in this case. Officers will therefore use the opportunities available to them to raise the matter with their Trading Standards counterparts at the County Council.

The City Council would encourage all members of the Oxford's community to engage with accredited letting agents when seeking accommodation in the City.

7. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Seamons

I am aware that some letting agents advertise family homes for sale in Oxford as investment properties only? What does he suggest can be done to end this despicable practice?

Response

The City Council has limited powers to deal this type of issue, although partners such as the Trading Standards unit at Oxfordshire County Council do.

As previously mentioned, the housing market in Oxford is such that the high demand for property and accommodation creates a situation where some landlords and agents may seek to take financial advantage of this situation.

Officers at the City Council would therefore welcome any information or intelligence from any resident, or Councillor, that it can present to the County Council to investigate.

Officers will be raising the matter with counterparts in the Trading Standards team in the County Council at the next available opportunity,

The City Council would encourage all members of the Oxford's community to engage with bona fide estate agents when looking to buy property in the City.

8. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Seamons

What are the implications for Oxford City Council of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn a decision by Westminster Council to house residents out of the borough, particularly that Labour have just cut the discretionary housing benefit budget?

Response

The full judgement of the Supreme Court case (Nzolameso v The City of Westminster) was only released on 2 April 2015 and officers are considering this and any local implications now. Should any of the Council's policies and procedures, in relation to discharging homeless duties into out-of-Oxford private rented accommodation, and the way this is communicated, need to be changed in light of this judgement, then these changes will be brought forward expeditiously.

9. From Councillor Hollick to Councillor Seamons

How many families in housing need has the City Council relocated outside of the City and outside of the County?

Response

The Council does not record 'relocations outside of the City or outside of Oxford' but does seek to assist a considerable number of households in housing need and either homeless or at risk of homelessness in a number of ways – often very focused on preventing or relieving their homelessness. In relation to assisting families to access private rented accommodation through the provision of a deposit or bond, through the Council's Home Choice scheme

– in 14/15, of the 95 new households assisted to find homes, 52 of these were in Oxford; 24 in other parts of Oxfordshire; and 19 elsewhere in the country. Most such moves are mutually agreed with the customer, but 12 of these moves were undertaken with the Council formally discharging its homeless duty through a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO). Of these 12, 2 were for offers in Oxfordshire districts and 10 were beyond Oxfordshire, in the next rental markets with suitable available homes at LHA rates.

10. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Seamons

What is the net financial cost or benefit to the Oxford City Council of selling a property under right to buy and building a replacement home?

Response

A brief financial analysis of the “costs” associated of losing a property from the Council’s housing stock via right to buy and replacing it over a 30 year period shows a potential loss to the Council of half a million pounds. Thirty years is the period we are advised to strategically monitor decisions and impacts in our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) via our Business Plan. The calculation does not account for in-year management and maintenance costs.

11. From Councillor Benjamin to Councillor Seamons

At the time of the Westgate planning discussions, members were reassured that, although there would be no affordable housing on the Westgate site, the developer contributions would be used to increase the level of social housing elsewhere. Is it therefore acceptable, and in the light of Oxford’s housing crisis, for the Council Leader (quoted in the Oxford Mail) to state that 40% social housing on the nearby Oxpens site is acceptable?

Response (as for Q28)

The City Council’s Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP3 is clear that a minimum of 50% of dwellings on larger sites should be provided as affordable housing, (40% at social rent and 10% as intermediate housing) although exceptions will be made if it can be robustly demonstrated that this makes a site unviable . This policy will apply to the Oxpen’s site as to other housing sites in the city. The statement quoted in the Oxford Mail does not depart from this policy.

The commitment made to the West Area Planning Committee, when it was considering the Westgate application, remains that the off-site contribution to affordable housing to be paid to the City Council by the Westgate Developer through the signed S106 agreement will be used to increase the level of social housing elsewhere in the city. The Oxpens site was described as the most likely opportunity. Whilst this remains the position no commitment was made by officers that this would be the only location considered.

Board member for Crime and Community Response (Councillor Dee Sinclair)

12. From Councillor Brandt to Councillor Sinclair

The plan to place gates around the Covered Market feels very similar to the recent anti-homeless spikes that were placed in London and created a massive outcry. As the council is now looking to clamp down on substance abusers rough sleepers, which is the main problem these gates are meant to address, surely this is an overkill? Does the portfolio holder agree that what little covered public spaces we have in the city centre should be left accessible for people such as those waiting out a sudden deluge or the growing numbers finding themselves on the streets for the first time, with nowhere to go?

Response

The plans for the gates to the Covered Market were recently discussed by officers with Cllr Hollick.

The Council is funding major programmes of support for rough sleepers, at a cost of over £1m, including the No Second Night Out programme, hostels and shelters. It also supports a range of specialist organisations such as Crisis to provide advice, help and support to homeless persons. The Council's work in the area of homelessness has been recognised by Central Government and there are other options for homeless persons.

Regular use of the Covered Market by rough sleepers has led to significant concerns. Because of the rough sleepers aggressive behaviour the Police are required to remove them when the Covered Market opens early in the morning. The rough sleepers leave rubbish and mess behind associated with substance abuse, including needles. This is unacceptable to the public and market traders and their staff, and also for Council staff who often have to deal with the rough sleepers and clear up each morning.

The Covered Market is a retail centre and an important element of the city centre economy. The Council has committed to improve and strengthen the Covered Market, and in response to the market traders has agreed to fund the new gates.

13. From Councillor Brandt to Councillor Sinclair

If the council decides to go ahead with a PSPO for the city centre, will the council also make all the associated checks and balances explicit and transparent in the relevant documentation?

Response

Public Space Protection Orders were introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and should be seen as an additional tool for Councils to use against anti-social behaviour in public spaces, whilst increasing the quality of life of those in the locality.

The City Executive Board will be considering a report on the proposed PSPO for city centre ASB issues on 14th May.

The proposal to establish the City Centre PSPO has involved extensive public consultation, and has included the establishment of a members group involving all ward members of affected wards. The group has been extensively involved in the process leading up to, and throughout, the public consultation period.

If the PSPO is adopted, it is important to note that partnership working will be a strong theme in its implementation, and a multi-agency support panel involving major partners and outreach teams, chaired by the City Council, will be established. The panel will have an oversight role, and also be responsible for determining appropriate and proactive strategies that help and improve the lives, and life chances of, for example beggars or rough sleepers. We seek in all our policies to ensure that causes are treated not symptoms.

High standards of training are already given to officers, and in future this would include a component on the implementation of the PSPO.

When deciding whether to implement a PSPO the Council must have particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.

If adopted by CEB in May, the City Council's Scrutiny Panel have committed to review the implementation of the City Centre PSPO within 6 months

Board member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport (Councillor John Tanner)

14. From Councillor Upton to Councillor Tanner

Getting people out of cars and on to bicycles, buses, trains and their own two feet would reduce congestion, reduce pollution, be a switch to low carbon forms of transport, help reduce inequality and improve health by getting people active. Given the huge importance of changing the way people move around our city would the portfolio holder agree with me that the County's Council's latest Oxford Transport Strategy falls far short of providing the dramatic changes we need to see in Oxford to give pedestrians, cyclists and buses the priority they need?

Response

The County Council's latest Oxford Transport Strategy contains some good ideas but certainly falls far short of what is needed. In particular:

- 1) Tunnelling under the centre of Oxford is a costly nonsense which will damage the beautiful heart of Oxford and destroy archaeology.
- 2) The County are right about the increase in journeys in future but the Rapid Transit Buses (RTB) they propose will not provide the number of extra buses and seats that are needed. It is too early to rule out trams in the future.
- 3) The new Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) does not make it clear which modes of transport should have most priority. We want to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and buses especially during rush hours.
- 4) The City Council wants a speedy end to the effective moratorium on urgently needed improvements for cyclists on Oxford's roads.

- 5) The City Council supports the same balanced transport policy for the Headington hospitals and the Cowley business park that has operated successfully for the city centre for many years. At present very many people who work in the eastern arc have little choice but to drive.
- 6) The County's latest OTS has failed to indicate sensible routes for the RTBs. Using crowded roads like the Cowley Road and London Road, or driving a bus lane across a golf course and nature reserve in Lye Valley, are unworkable.
- 7) The City Council will continue to keep open its Park & Rides (P & R) in the city. Indeed we want to expand Seacourt P & R. But we also support more P &Rs beyond Oxford.
- 8) We support some ideas in the OTS such as more electric vehicles, cleaner air, a passenger rail link to Cowley and consulting about a work-place parking levy. We are opposed to road pricing as an unworkable burden on car drivers and businesses.

15. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Tanner

Following the extraordinary story in the press about the City Council agreeing to remove solar panels on Council housing due to aesthetic concerns, can you assure Council that all future such installations will be adequately discussed with neighbours to meet any possible concerns and that the houses concerned in the story will be getting their solar panels back, with all the benefits that will accrue to them as a result?

Response

The solar panels on the ten new Council homes at Bury Knowle will remain in place and will enable the new tenants to enjoy cheaper energy bills. I understand solar panels are permitted development except in conservation areas and for new developments. A technicality meant that planning permission for the solar panels at Bury Knowle might not apply but this was speedily corrected.

16. From Cllr Simmons to Councillor John Tanner

Will the portfolio holder reverse the decision to remove the solar panels from the roofs of 10 new affordable houses built by the City Council on a former depot site off North Place, next to Bury Knowle Park on the basis that they breached no planning policies, are consistent with the City Council's carbon reduction policies and help those on low incomes to save money on energy bills.

Response

The solar panels on the ten new Council homes at Bury Knowle will remain in place and will enable the new tenants to enjoy cheaper energy bills. I understand solar panels are permitted development except in conservation areas and for new developments. A technicality meant that planning permission for the solar panels at Bury Knowle might not apply but this was speedily corrected.

17. From Cllr Gant to Councillor John Tanner

At its meeting on December 1, 2014, council voted unanimously to adopt a range of safety measures on lorries to improve safety for cyclists. At its subsequent meeting, council was promised an update on progress "within two weeks". No such update has been received. Will the leader please inform council:

Has the council's own fleet of lorries been fitted with the safety measures described?

Has the city council contacted the county council to urge the adoption of the traffic order referred to in the motion of December 1, and will he circulate that letter and any response to members?

Has the city council adopted the requirement for its own contractors to have these measures on its lorries?

Response

A letter was not sent to the County Council straight away. For this I apologise. Members have now received a copy of the e-mail that was sent to the County last week.

With regards to the Council's fleet, all new purchase vehicles, where it is possible, now have side bars and side mirrors installed as standard. Of our current fleet, the Council now as a result of the motion has 31 of its 50 vehicles fitted with sidebars, and the retrofit process continues.

Regarding contractors, the most practical approach to achieve the aim is to have the issue in the scoring matrix for award, and this has been actioned. In the case of Buildbase, a major supply to the Council, this requirement has already been put on them and they are complying with the requirements.

The Council has looked into introducing cycle safety into the planning process, however cycle safety in this context is not a material planning consideration. We cannot, therefore successfully require this as a condition.

18. From Cllr Simmons to Councillor John Tanner

What assurances can the portfolio holder give that the small electrical items now collected by the City Council each week are actually recycled?

Response

The kerbside WEEE tonnage for the 2014/15 year, excluding March, (we're yet to receive the figures) is 23.27 tonnes.

All WEEE collected is treated as end of life and is processed by our specialist contractors, Computer Salvage Specialists (CSS) who are an Oxford based company.. All of the items are broken down during the process into their component parts. Once completed, all the various grades are sent to refiners for use in re-manufacturing. Our contractors' recovery rates are among the highest in the industry, with less than 1% losses during the recycling process.

19. From Cllr Simmons to Councillor John Tanner

Will the Portfolio Holder be requiring Fusion to deliver additional carbon savings - on top of the 2% a year they have proposed on the basis that the Council's own target (which would have been applied had the leisure premises remained within City control) is 5% per annum.

Response

The City Council's 5% minimum target for reduced emissions each year overall still allows some services to vary the percentage by which they reduce (or even increase) their carbon footprint.

We have incorporated a wide range of low carbon technology within the leisure centres, most recently the biomass boiler, PV array and combined heat and power unit at the new pool and made good progress reducing energy usage in our leisure centres.

It is important to note that as usage in the centres has increased by 40% over the past five years that there is also an increase in the amount of energy used. We have now started reporting carbon on a usage per visit basis which will provide a more accurate picture.

It is proposed to use the 2% target for the year ahead and review this once the new pool has been in operation for a full year.

Deputy Leader of the Council, (Councillor Ed Turner)

20. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Turner

Can you tell Council how many teachers have now been helped by the Council's mortgage support scheme?

Response

No loans have yet been agreed. The promotion by the partner housing association Catalyst has only just begun with a view to having the first loans agreed before the summer recess; all headteachers are now aware of the scheme. We are currently also revising the scheme rules on the advice of schools to include existing staff at schools taking on positions of leadership who may otherwise leave teaching in the city. It is regrettable that the scheme has been slow to start – unfortunately there were significant delays in having it signed off by government, which is the reason for the delay. It is worth noting that the Council's contribution to the scheme is matched by Catalyst, and we are hopeful, after the government's unfortunate delay, that it will be useful in the recruitment and retention of leadership staff in Oxford's schools.

Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price)

21. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Price

Would the Leader please update Council on action he and officers have taken following the motion supported by all parties to introduce a code of practice on the erection and removal of sales and letting boards in the City, and indicate whether in his view such a code should be mandatory or voluntary?

Response

I can confirm that the Development Control Manager has prepared a draft paper on this matter. Work has been undertaken to understand the scale of the issue in the City, to understand what other Councils have done and with what success and to explore a number of options and their likely effectiveness. This includes a comparison of the mandatory and voluntary approaches. The draft has raised a number of issues, particularly relating to financial and staff resources, that will need further consideration before a report can be presented to CEB.

22. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Price

Noting that Headington and Summertown were placed by the Sunday Times in the top 6 urban places to live in the SE, would the Leader ascribe this accolade at least partly to the consultative nature and hard work of the local councillors in those areas?

Response

Since the criteria used by the Sunday Times did not include any reference to local political representation, it would be irrational to draw this inference. The criteria did, however, include reference to the quality of the streetscene, crime and green spaces, all of which have benefitted from seven years of consistently high quality management by the City Council and its partners.

23. From Councillor Hollick to Councillor Price

Oxford Living Wage – why do City Council salary increases for those on the Oxford Living Wage lag six months behind changes in the London Living Wage to which it is indexed?

Response

All Council staff, with the exception of some apprentices, earn above the Oxford Living Wage rate (£8.69 per hour); the minimum hourly rate for our staff is £9.12 per hour. Our current 5-year pay agreement with UNISON and Unite operates on a financial year basis with the 1.5% guaranteed increase being implemented from April 1st each year.

24. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Price

At the recent Examination into the Northern Gateway Area Action plan, it became clear that there was a wide range of possible figures on the number of jobs to be created. As this will determine the scale of transport infrastructure improvements needed to meet the Core Strategy Inspector's criterion of

'Development is dependent upon the securing of measures designed to mitigate the impact on the local and strategic road networks, acceptable to both the Highways Agency and Highways Authority', it is a very important figure which needs to be agreed before any approval can be given for development on the site. Estimates range between 3,500 and 'over 8,000' as said by you at the recent Oxford Strategic Partnership event in the Town Hall. Which is the figure to which the highways authority and the Highways Agency should be working in developing the necessary infrastructure?

Response

During the evolution of the planning process for the Northern gateway site, a range of different authors have produced forecasts for the likely number of jobs that would be generated by the development. These forecasts have used different methodologies, for example some include construction jobs, and others include supporting service jobs to estimate the aggregate impact of the development. It is impossible to be precise about the exact number of direct jobs at this point because this will depend on the mix of knowledge based employers that move into the site. The final split between lab based environments and office based environments will have a significant effect on the total job numbers.

Transport analysis is based upon floorspace not worker numbers. While there is clearly a link, the TRICS data which goes into the transport model comes from assessment of different use types based upon a national database of transport surveys covering a wide variety of actual developments. The County Council (as Highways Authority) have looked at the maximum floorspace proposed in the AAP and used this in the North Oxford Transport Strategy (NOTS) work; this means that they have tested the worst case scenario. In practice, the more lab space provided, the lower the number of people that will be employed on the site.

Both the County Council and the Highways Agency are confident about the transport analysis that has been carried out and they supported the AAP in the examination.

25. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Price

The Forward Plan documents usually have a number of Delegated Officer Key Decisions listed. Some involve the approval of unspecified very large sums of Council funds and there seems to be no mechanism by which the exact figures are reported to members or the public. Where will these figures be reported and available? The Homelessness Grants Allocation, ID 1008005, seems to be saying that over £500,000 will be allocated by discussion between the Board Member and the Head of Housing; should this not be subject to public scrutiny?

Response

The report to City Executive Board on 12th March 2015 on the 'Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds in 2015' set out the proposed spending plans for the coming year. This was approved by the Board. Delegated authority was granted to the Head of Housing and Property Services in consultation with the Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration to allocate any balance in the Preventing Homelessness Funds. This is unlikely to apply in this year, as

the report shows that expenditure will broadly equate to the funding available in-year. Any spending of accrued balances from this year or previous years will follow the financial delegations as set out in the Council's Constitution, with any spend over £500,000 requiring the approval of the City Executive Board.

26. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price

Will the leader agree that the poor results from the KRM program demonstrate that it was the wrong choice for Oxford, and that the optimistic assessment of its impact was based only on its own evaluation; and that, given the range of ideas in the Next Steps section of the report, will he now accept that the proposal in the Liberal Democrat alternative budget, to make funding available to schools for headteachers to use as they see fit in order to achieve specified targets, was the correct one, rather than imposing the prescriptive, inflexible KRM program, which schools largely did not want?

Response

The evidence from the analysis of the KRM programme shows clearly that, in the two schools which stuck to the programme throughout the period, more rapid progress was recorded than in the rest of the city and elsewhere. There is no proposal to continue the KRM programme in schools which do not wish to adopt it.

27. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price

In assessing progress in schools, why is there no mention of the considerable benefits of the Pupil Premium?

Response

The City Council has no evidence on the impact of the Pupil Premium funding. All schools are required to report the usage of this funding annually, so Cllr Gant will be able to investigate the many uses to which it has been put by trawling the DfE and Ofsted websites.

28. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price

To the leader of the council: in the Oxford Mail of April 1, Cllr Price said of the recent deal regarding Oxpens "we also want to plan for between 40 and 50 per cent of housing to be affordable". Council's own policy is for a minimum of 50% affordable. In addition, the percentage of affordable housing provided in the residential part of the new Westgate development is zero. The west area planning committee was clearly led to understand that this shortfall would be made up on other sites, and Oxpens was specifically mentioned as a possible site. Why, therefore, is the leader of the council flagging up to potential developers in advance that the council will not even meet its own policy at Oxpens, as well as apparently abandoning the commitment to make up the shortfall from the Westgate?

Response (as for Q10)

The City Council's Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP3 is clear that a minimum of 50% of dwellings on larger sites should be provided as affordable housing, (40% at social rent and 10% as intermediate housing) although exceptions will

be made if it can be robustly demonstrated that this makes a site unviable . This policy will apply to the Oxpens site as to other housing sites in the city.

The commitment made to the West Area Planning Committee, when it was considering the Westgate application, remains that the off-site contribution to affordable housing to be paid to the City Council by the Westgate Alliancethrough the S106 agreement will be used to increase the level of social housing elsewhere in the city. The Oxpens site was identified as the most likely opportunity. Whilst this remains the position, no commitment was made by officers that this would be the only location considered.

29. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Price

Will the Council be reviewing its processes with respect to gender equality after someone was initially turned away from a housing interview because they no longer identified as the gender listed on their birth certificate (and did not possess a passport) and were thus unable to provide the requested proof of identity? (Note: In the end, housing accepted a National Insurance number but apparently this is not normal procedure).

Response

The Housing Service provides advice and options to all who request support, without requiring evidence of identity. If a formal request for assistance is lodged under the Council's homeless duty, officers are required, under the statutory provisions, to identify the applicant as part of the assessment of eligibility. This requires formal evidence of identity, which is typically a driving licence or a passport. Whilst officers may use discretion, they may not always feel able to accept an application without further evidence of identity being provided, as appears to have occurred in this case.

If the details of this case are given to the Housing Service they will review it.

30. From Councillor Benjamin to Councillor Price

The Council's current 5 year housing land supply plan expired at the end of March 2015. Without it, it is more difficult to manage through the planning process the type and location of new and replacement housing. When will the Council be publishing a new 5 year plan?

Response

The question is based on a misapprehension. The Council has an adopted Core Strategy which runs to 2026, and a Sites and Housing Plan which covers the same period. We also have a number of Area Action Plans and the saved policies of the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001-16. The OLP will apply after 2016. We produce an Annual Monitoring Report and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which set out the supply of housing for 5 years and where it will come from. The current land supply plan does not therefore expire this year.

31. From Councillor Benjamin to Councillor Price

Do we really need more office space at Oxpens when we don't have enough affordable housing for existing Oxford employees? (especially since the Westgate Development will have no affordable housing).

Response

The supply of office space in Oxford has been reducing for several years, limiting the choice on offer for businesses of all sizes. The availability of offices to let fell by 11% in Oxford over the 12 months to 2014. In Autumn 2014 a number of market locations, including the city centre, were identified as having a severe shortage of Grade A provision at a time of increasing demand for such space. The most recent figures suggest that a total of only 55,000 sq. ft. of space is available in the city centre (with 20,000 under offer). This is an insignificant level of supply compared to other city locations, constraining the city's offer to local businesses especially those for which proximity to Oxford University is important.

Oxpens is the largest site left available for development in the City Centre and it is proposed to make provision for a range of important uses on this site, including affordable housing. On such major central sites, a mix of development uses is often the most sustainable option, balancing housing, amenity and employment space and helping to create a vibrant city offer. There is evidence that many employees prefer to work in city centres for reasons of access, amenity and job satisfaction.

32. From Councillor Benjamin to Councillor Price

Do we really need another large hotel on the Oxpens site that will take yet more trade away from smaller, locally owned guest houses?

Response

There is a significant undersupply of hotel accommodation in the city centre and a significant increase in demand. Assessment of occupancy rates shows that Oxford's rates are extremely high, well above national averages and not far behind London. Development of new hotel stock is further limited by the scarcity of sites and infrastructure issues. It is appropriate that City centre sites such as Oxpens should be the focus for a mix of uses, including hotels, in terms of creating a vibrant city offer and promoting more sustainable travel patterns.

The scale of demand is such that there is more than enough need for extra bed spaces of all types so that any new large hotel on the Oxpens site will be highly unlikely to take trade away from the city's excellent range of guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation.

OXFORD CITY FULL COUNCIL MEETING 13 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM 17: PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT DO NOT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING.

Addresses

(1) Address by Jane Alexander

(2) Address by Nigel Gibson, www.savetemplecowleypools.web.com
Openness and transparency in Oxford City Council

(3) Address by Chaka Artwell, resident of Oxford, OX3 8BW (redacted until after the election)

Questions

Question from Sarah Lasenby

(1) Address by Jane Alexander

Today I would like to draw your attention to the experience of just a few people and how they have been affected by the closure of Temple Cowley Pools.

From a parent with a young daughter:

I learnt to swim at Temple Cowley pool 35 years ago and my daughter started to learn to swim there when she was 4 months old, we used to go to lessons every Friday at TCP. We live walking distance from Temple Cowley pool; the new pool at Blackbird Leys is miles from us so we have to drive and there is often not enough parking at the new centre.

The Ducklings swimming session at the Leys pool is the same price for half as long (30 minutes instead of 60) as it was at TCP.

There are not enough swimming lessons and public/general swim sessions since 2 pools (the old Blackbird Leys pool and Temple Cowley) were closed, to be replaced with only one. It's right that BL pool is to public for school swimming sessions, it's vital that children learn to swim, but that's why we need two pools in East Oxford, so that there are still enough public sessions. Exercise classes at the Leys leisure centre are now hugely overbooked, as there are two centres' worth of people being forced against their will to fit into one.

I'm worried about a woman with a chronic neurological illness who used to swim at Temple Cowley. She didn't have a car so wouldn't be able to get to BBL as her condition wouldn't allow her to walk as far as the (two buses each way) journey would require, also it would be too expensive for her.

In this day and age when illness and obesity is such a problem, removing an exercise facility in walking distance for so many people is extremely illadvised.

There is still massive public support for Temple Cowley pool and gym, as the recent poll in the Oxford Mail showed, with 92% in favour of re-opening the centre.

From someone in your 'elderly' target group:

I am so grateful that you are continuing the fight against the closure of Temple Cowley Pool. On a personal note, since being unable to do my weekly swim at Temple Cowley (the other pools on offer are too far from my home to enable me to use them), my physical health has deteriorated considerably. This is what was expected; swimming is the only form of exercise that a partially disabled person can do. I am now deprived of it by Councillors who have little idea of the health benefits. They should also realise that they have completely lost my vote. I will be contributing to your fighting fund and again thank you so much for your attempts at helping.

My own experience is that I could not swim and use pool exercise classes as I had before TCP closure. I used to exercise/swim 3 times a week. After TCP closed I found BL not open at similar times, my class was now held in the evening and not in the swimming pool but the shallow learner pool! We who choose to water based exercise do it because we need the buoyancy of the water to support us, not have half our bodies out of the water! It did not work for any of us. We are being sold short.

Swimming time for public severely is reduced by schools occupying half the pool and the other half being 'ALL DEEP END'. Nowhere to stand and rest when necessary at the end of a length. Makes swimming impossible for many, especially those with health issues.

The opening times to public severely reduced. No steps were available into the pool, even though we were told it was all ready for the public weeks earlier.

In the first 5 weeks post TCP closure, I had only managed to swim 7 times total using Ferry, BL and Barton.

My body had become stiffer than before. When I lost my balance whilst crossing the Cowley Rd on 4 Feb I was not agile enough to regain my balance. I smashed into the kerb and suffered 5 fractures. This is not only painful but has limited my ability to exercise even further. Had TCP been open I would be there as often as I could, doing exercise and trying to proactively look after myself. I realise of course that health and fitness facilities are not in a particular location for just one person, but my experience is typical of the emails the Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools has been receiving.

At the CEB meeting last week there was a lot of self-praise between officers and councillors for the numbers of people using Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, and the waiting lists for classes. This surely shows the need for more, not fewer pools and gyms especially when you haven't even asked the people what WE want! Oxford Mail has asked, and this week sees 92% voting to want to keep TCP. With this from our local press, isn't it time the council allow the people in the form of SaveTCPcic, to take over and run Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre for the good of all?

(4) Address by Nigel Gibson, www.savetemplecowleypools.web.com

Openness and transparency in Oxford City Council

My address this evening is about openness and responsiveness within Oxford City Council, and the way you try and portray yourself, in a way that is so different from how the public views you. Operating in your own insulated bubble is not the way an organisation should behave, as you become more and more detached from the people you are here to serve. I've spoken about this before at Council, pointing out your self-aggrandisement. In response then, a councillor misinterpreted what I was talking about and defended the aims of individual councillors. That wasn't my point.

The self-aggrandisement I was referring to was the Council's usual approach of spinning everything to show itself in the best light, not any particular individual councillor – it would take far more than my five minutes this evening to cover those I could mention.

You have recently approved another version of your Corporate Strategy – a fine tome no doubt for what is, after all, a district council. Within it, you talk proudly of the MJ Award for Highest Achieving Council of 2014, describing it as a “crowning achievement of the year”. You go on to say:

“Referencing the awards that we have received should not be mistaken for self-congratulation or complacency. We hope that the external recognition that the Council is receiving will give the people of Oxford confidence that the Council's high aspirations for the city in difficult times are matched by its capacity and capability to deliver high quality results.”

The impression given in the plan, and indeed from all the publicity put out by the Council, is that it is a very prestigious award, implicitly independently judged from third party recommendations.

Indeed. But how many of you actually know anything of the award process itself. Did you know that the judges are all senior executives from other local authorities; no members of the public, or anyone not associated in some way with a local authority.

The candidates for the awards are self-selecting, making their own submissions. Given the way in which the Council has been challenged over recent times, particularly about not listening to the public you are here to serve on so many issues – Temple Cowley Pools is the most obvious one, but there are many others – Northern Gateway, Westgate redevelopment, the Barns Road community centre, Barton West, I don't believe that you would find many members of the public suggesting you should get an award for “High Achieving”.

So I was very interested in what was in the submission that presented such a compelling and rose-tinted view that elevated the Council's performance above all others. I keep being told that you operate with openness and transparency, so I naturally searched the website. No sign of anything there. I had to look (and dig a bit) on the Municipal Journal website itself, to get this 9 page document, apparently prepared by Peter Sloman and Bob Price. I have to say that reading it was a revelation, I hadn't realised what a wonderful job the Council has done for the people you are here to serve. No balance, no mention of any controversy, no mention of the thousands of people feeling abandoned in the Cowley area who protested long and hard that they wanted to keep their health and fitness facilities, or how the community of users at Temple Cowley Pools is no longer – they have written to

the Campaign, expressing their sadness at the loss of their social network. I recall the phrase the Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools adopted regarding all the Council's pronouncements on why Temple Cowley Pools should be closed - Inaccurate, Incomplete, Misleading and Untrue. Having said all that, you manage to let yourselves down from the start – the front page repeats your oft-repeated but never substantiated mantra of “World Class City for Everyone” – but manage to mis-spell “World” – such lack of attention to detail is simply embarrassing, not high achieving. And of course the award is for “Best Achieving”, not “Highest Achieving”.

So, this is what I call self-aggrandisement – using an award that you put yourselves forward for, in your Corporate Plan, to try and improve your reputation. And then you simply can't be bothered to check spelling or get the award's description correct.

Another really good example of self-aggrandisement was on show recently, at the City Executive Board. Now, the vast majority of people will never see a CEB meeting; held at one of the most inconvenient times of the day, 5pm, and having changed the constitution several times to reduce the public input to handing out answers to questions before the meetings, there really is no incentive for anyone to come and watch. But now everyone has the opportunity – cameras are allowed in, albeit grudgingly and only with the force of law. Everyone now has the opportunity to see the CEB in inaction – no debate, no criticism (constructive or otherwise), no challenge – you have to wonder why they bother having them at all, and that is certainly the way they seem to be conducted. You can see an example for yourself, at this web address <http://bit.ly/1aeM8uP>

The particular event on camera in the meeting was the approval of the Fusion Lifestyle Annual Service Plan, a glossy leaflet put out each year to tell us all how wonderfully the partnership with Fusion is running our remaining leisure centres. There were a couple of causes for particular ‘celebration’ during the discussion – overall, a council officer felt it had been a “good year” – no reference to Temple Cowley Pools, or the adverse feedback over the closure – and there seems to be a pride taken in announcing the approval ratings of over 95%, when at Scrutiny last year, and in the answers to CEB questions, it was admitted that the way these ratings are produced are not clearly and fully explained to readers of the document. – there are many, many people who would disagree with that council officer. The other celebration moment came from the Fusion manager, who announced that there were waiting lists for classes, so that was a very good thing and showed how popular everything was – there were signs at this point that the whole CEB was going to erupt in a standing ovation.

Ignored, of course, was the fact that you, clearly against the wishes of the people, have closed down two facilities – so it's not really surprising that you have waiting lists, and if you are on a waiting list that is certainly not a cause for celebration. And those waiting lists include children waiting to learn to swim. The demand is there for more facilities – keeping Temple Cowley Pools open would address that demand.

So, in conclusion, I stand by what I have said previously, that this council, a mere district council, continues to be guilty of self-aggrandisement. I, and most of the public, are keen to celebrate what you do right – but it's what you do right in the eyes of the people you are here to serve that matters, not what you think makes you look better. Listen to what the public are telling you, and act on that in their best interests, not yours.

(3) Address by Chaka Artwell, resident of Oxford, OX3 8BW

This address is redacted until after the election on 7 May.

Questions

Question from Sarah Lasenby

I have been told from various sources that the Oxford Swimming Club is using both Ferry and Barton pools for training and that people have been turning up only to find they can't swim. Why is this? Was it not the plan that the Leys Pool would be the pool for the club to use to replace Temple Cowley Pool? What can you do to prevent people making pointless journeys to Ferry and Barton for their swimming? Can the Club be asked to use the Leys Pool? but in any case can some effective time tabling be put in place to show at least a week in advance when the pools are available to the public?

To leave things as they are is to penalise the poorer people who can't afford to waste money on useless bus journeys. How many people have stopped swimming because they can't afford the time or the money to get to the Leys Pool? It should be possible to get this figure by deducting those who are not attending the new pool from those who were passed over to the Leys from Temple Cowley.

Response from Councillor Rowley, Board Member for Leisure contract and community partnership grants

The City of Oxford Swimming Club formerly used Ferry, Barton and Temple Cowley pools for their training and it now uses Ferry, Barton and the Leys Pools and Leisure Centre; in fact, the pool replacement has allowed them to reduce their hours at Ferry. The timetable for all our pools and exercise classes is published in advance and users can find a live timetable on the website for each facility; but in any case there would only be a change if an exceptional circumstance made it necessary.

The Leys Pools and Leisure Centre has had 161,571 visitors in its first three months, almost as many as Temple Cowley Pools did in the whole of the last year. I am sorry if anyone has been put off visiting our leisure facilities by the necessary replacement of the pool, but it has enabled many thousands more people to enjoy leisure and keep fit. All Oxford's people now have first-rate, affordable public facilities which are financially and environmentally sustainable and will remain so into the long-term future.

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The MJ Achievement Awards 2014

Oxford City Council Best Achieving Council Submission



Oxford City Council - Building a world-class city for everyone

Best Achieving Council

Summary

Oxford City Council is one of the local government success stories of recent times.

Six years ago, the Council was failing. Subsequently, it has improved its performance and efficiency year on year. As a result – and in spite of substantial government spending cuts and the impact of the recession - it has been able to safeguard the vulnerable from cuts in the services that they require, deliver significant new investment in the city’s infrastructure, and avoid compulsory redundancies in the Council’s workforce. The City Council is now providing strong and visible leadership to the city and playing a key role in regional partnership working.

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Submission

Background

Six years ago, the Council was characterized by:

- ineffective managerial leadership
- poor relationships between senior councillors and senior managers
- high costs and relatively poor performance
- low staff morale
- high levels of staff sickness
- poor relationships between unions and management ▪ fraught relationships with key partners and stakeholders.

The Council’s ambitions for the city were high and the commitment of its staff to public service was deep. However, it lacked the management capacity to turn its ambitions and commitment into practical achievements. These failings had resulted in a “weak” CPA assessment, a failed unitary bid, and frustrated ambition within the organisation.

Building an efficient, effective council

Today – in large part due to strong leadership and a strong partnership between councillors, managers, staff and trade unions - Oxford City Council is one of the most creative and effective councils in the country. The



relentless quest for ever greater levels of efficiency is at the heart of its success.

Peter Sloman's priorities on taking over as Chief Executive six years ago were to:

- boost capacity and competence in the senior management team.
- forge close working relationships with
Bob Price's new political Councillor Bob Price, Chief Executive Peter Sloman administration. and the Customer Services team at the Customer

Service Excellence accreditation presentation

Significant progress has been made in both of these areas.

Management capacity

Recruitment has improved, with managers being appointed on the basis of a strong track record in specific rather than generalist areas. We have also continued to invest in traditional performance and programme management training. However, the main aim has been to encourage managers and staff to embrace new ways of thinking and working. Leadership, coaching and team-building skills, developing business acumen and the ability to 'think outside the box', are all critical. Increasingly, the Council sees coaching and mentoring as being at the heart of successful management. These approaches can generate higher levels of staff engagement with what the Council is trying to achieve for the city.

Structural changes have helped to improve the quality of management. All major Council initiatives are now delivered through a series of cross-service programme boards which are designed to minimise the silo mentality. Operational changes have also helped in this regard. The establishment of the council's corporate call centre, for example, has radically reshaped the relationships between departments and between front and back office staff.

Councillors and managers

The relationship between councillors and managers has been transformed. A robust but mutually respectful and supportive relationship between councillors and senior management has developed. The ruling Labour Group is highly disciplined, with senior councillors now fulfilling a powerful strategic role, entrusting day-to-day management to officers. There is shared ownership of the Council's corporate priorities with City Executive Board portfolios reflecting the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

Outcomes

The senior leadership team had the shared aim of building an efficient, effective council. That partnership has so far delivered:

- fewer but better managers

- around £8 million in efficiency savings over the last four years alone with a further £3.7million planned over the next four
- high quality services with around 75% of performance targets met or exceeded
- a single corporate call centre, one council number, and an extremely ambitious Lagan CRM implementation. Our call centre deals with nearly 263,000 calls annually. Last year we resolved 90% of queries at the first point of contact
- modernised offices with a 30% reduction in space
- flexible working practices, including home working
- streamlined support services and processes
- a mature and productive relationship with Trade Unions
- 41% reduction in sickness absence as a result of improved staff morale and robust performance management
- a Living Wage for all Council staff and contractors.

Efficiency as a means to an end

For Oxford City Council, efficiency is not an end in itself. Rather it is an essential prerequisite if the Council is to deliver its mission to the people of Oxford.

Oxford appears to be a thriving city with many opportunities for work and leisure and - for many residents - this is the daily reality of their lives.

However, the city has major inequalities in life chances.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 Football match at Wood Farm places Oxford in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England. Twelve areas, in the south and east of the city, are among the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas experience multiple levels of deprivation - low skills, low incomes and relatively high levels of crime.

The senior leadership team believes passionately in the creative role that local government can play in the life of local communities - in particular by helping people in the city's more deprived areas to help themselves to a better future.

Working with councillors, strategic partners and citizens the senior leadership team has developed a corporate planning and delivery model which clearly aligns the Council's priorities and budgets with the needs of the city's communities. They want to build a world class city for all of Oxford's citizens. They are turning this ambition into reality by delivering five corporate priorities: ▪ A vibrant and sustainable economy

- Meeting housing needs
- Strong and active communities
- Cleaner greener Oxford



- An efficient and effective council.

[Read the Corporate Plan on our website.](#)

Delivering results

The Council's efficiency improvements have been summarised earlier in this submission. A summary of results across other corporate priorities indicates the level of the Council's ambitions for the city.

A vibrant and sustainable economy

- injecting more than £134 million of capital investment into the city's infrastructure (e.g. through house-building and leisure) over the next four years, and creating over 900 new jobs
- investing £400k per year to improve the life-chances of our young people, and the city's skills base, by increasing educational Design for new £9.23m swimming pool in attainment in deprived areas where results Blackbird Leys have historically been poor. We are funding and leading these programmes even though the Council is not the education authority
- investing £150k per year to provide apprenticeships at Oxford City Council.



Meeting housing needs

- working through an innovative joint venture with Grosvenor Estates to build a new community of nearly 900 homes at Barton Park, including a new primary school, community recreation facilities and parks. The Council is also building 113 new homes on other sites in the city
- investing £13.6 million over the next four years to upgrade kitchens and central heating in Council homes
- investing over £1 million per year to improve Land at Barton Park environmental and parking measures on Oxford's estates
- enforcing standards in the private rented sector more proactively. Due to very high house prices, one in five Oxford residents live in houses in multiple occupation.



Strong and active communities

- investing £240k per year to improve access to sporting and cultural activities for young people in areas of greatest need



- complete a new competition pool in Blackbird Leys and continue to improve our other leisure facilities so that we can provide private sector quality at public sector prices. Oxford is now in the top quartile for adult activity in Oxfordshire, from being one of least active areas in 2006
- continuing to provide free swimming for Christmas Light Festival lantern parade 2013 under 17s, particularly for those in areas of greatest need
- continuing to invest in culture and community events.

Cleaner greener Oxford

- investing £666,000 in capital and on-going revenue funding of £100,000 per year to extend the successful weekly food waste collection service to the 15,000 flats in the city
- spending an additional £12,000 per year on a door-to-door campaign to improve recycling and street cleanliness through encouragement and enforcement
- leading the OxFutures project to mobilise large-scale investment in energy efficiency Street sweeping in Jericho projects. Kick-started by a £1.3 million grant from Intelligent Energy Europe, OxFutures aims to leverage investment of £15 million into local energy projects over the next three years. The aim is to achieve a 40% reduction in local carbon emissions by 2020 and to mainstream low carbon economic development.



Partnership working

Many of the challenges that face Oxford cannot be solved by Oxford City Council on its own and improved partnership working is another important achievement.

Historically there have been significant political differences between the conservative county and district councils which surround Oxford and resolutely non-conservative Oxford City Council.

Squabbles between the city and county councils used to feature as regular front page View of Oxford from South Park entertainment. Over the last six years, the City Council's current leadership has moved beyond this and has pursued a strategic course which is in the interests of the city and its region.



The City Council has, for example, worked with the County Council, the other four Oxfordshire district councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the universities and the science facilities at Harwell and Culham, to deliver a successful City Deal for Oxford and Oxfordshire. As a result, around £95million of public money will be

invested in Oxford and the surrounding areas. The City Deal builds on the potential of the area to deliver world-leading technology and business innovation. It will create more than 18,000 long-term jobs in high-tech areas, in addition to the likely 30,000 construction jobs needed for the area’s development. From the City Council’s point of view, a key benefit is that it will also accelerate the delivery of 7,500 new homes by 2018 through the combined Oxfordshire Housing Programme. The City deal builds on the success of previous partnership initiatives.

Providing local jobs for local people

The senior leadership team believes in the reality of partnership working - not just the words – and a strong partnership and open dialogue between councillors, managers, and trade unions - is at the heart of the Council’s success. The changes that they have driven through the Council have built on the deep belief in the public sector ethos that pervades the Council’s workforce.

The Council has not been swept along by the view that the private sector is necessarily the only provider of efficient and innovative services. Rather, it has a clear preference for in-house provision – public enterprise - where it can match or exceed the market. Where many other councils have been entering into strategic partnerships with the private sector,

Oxford City Council has been carrying out rigorous and prioritised Fundamental Service Reviews and investing to improve management competence and efficiency. A Fundamental Service Review of our waste management service, for example, resulted in our in-house service delivering better cost and quality than private sector competitors. As a result we have consistently improved our recycling rate – from 20% in 2005–6 to nearly 45% currently. This makes us one of the top-performing city areas. We are reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill year on year.

As the selfless and tireless performance of our DLO staff during the recent floods demonstrates, providing local jobs and local services for local people results in a level of commitment that would be hard to match through an outsourced contract. Investment in our services is now also enabling us to generate income through trading with external organisations, e.g. by providing housing repairs and parks maintenance services. In the face of on-going cuts from central government this incomes



Council officers distributing sand bags

contributes to maintaining services and jobs.

The City Council’s approach to improvement has transformed its relationships with Trade Unions. Councils across the country are reducing staff and the main desire of the local unions is obviously to avoid compulsory redundancies. The Council, which

genuinely believes that its staff – many of whom are also local residents - are its major asset, also wants to avoid this.

On this understanding management, Unison and Unite have agreed innovative pay deals which involve:

- a partnership payment linked to savings, performance, and attendance targets
- performance-linked increments
- A 5-year-deal negotiated outside the national agreement which secures the Council’s budget position while at the same time giving staff an annual 1.5% cost of living increase for the next four years in exchange for no strikes
- a Living Wage of £8.36 per hour.

Long-term, partnership-based planning is protecting staff interests and public services. Since these arrangements have been in place, there have been no compulsory redundancies, and the Council has been awarded IIP and the Customer Excellence Award.

The Council’s preference for in-house services where these provide best value helps to strengthen the link between the elected local authority and the community it serves. Local democracy delivering local services staffed by local people suggests that we really are all in it together.

Conclusion

The key message from the Council’s leadership has been that a house divided will fall and we are all much stronger when we work together in a shared cause – in this case, the importance of public service and the role that public service can play in the community. Not every member of staff has shared the vision or been able to make the attitudinal and professional changes required and these people have moved on. Overwhelmingly, however, unions and staff – as demonstrated



Staff conference

through innovative pay deals and the award of IIP

– have seen the sense in this approach. The Council, and the city, is stronger as a result.

Councillor Bob Price
Leader

Peter Sloman
Chief Executive

Oxford City Council

Oxford City Council



CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



February 2014

OXFORD CITY FULL COUNCIL MEETING 13 APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM 20: MOTIONS ON NOTICE –motions from Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, groups in turn.

Motions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.16.

Substantive amendments received by the Head of Law and Governance before publication of this document are included.

1. Using your Vote (proposed by Cllr Tanner, seconded by Cllr Clack) Labour member motion

Original motion proposed

This City Council urges every resident who can to use their vote in the General Election on May 7th. We call on each of the candidates in the Oxford East and Oxford West & Abingdon constituencies:

- a) to speak up for local government
- b) to pledge to build the homes Oxford desperately needs
- c) to support our schools and universities
- d) to back a vibrant low carbon economy
- e) to commit to a Living Wage and
- f) to promote an international, safe and tolerant city.

We expect those elected to represent Oxford in the House of Commons to fight for a fairer, greener and even more beautiful city for all.

Amendments proposed by Councillor Hollick, seconded Councillor Benjamin

Amend 1b) to read *'to pledge to build the affordable homes that are desperately needed in Oxford and the surrounding area'*
and 1e) to read *'to commit to a national Living Wage and the Oxford Living Wage'*

Amendments proposed by Councillor Fooks

Replace (a) with

- (a) *To stand up for local government, campaigning for proper funding and devolution of both powers and budgets to a local level*

And to insert 'colleges' in line (c), so that it reads

- (c) to support our schools, *colleges* and universities.

Motion as amended including both amendments

This City Council urges every resident who can to use their vote in the General Election on May 7th. We call on each of the candidates in the Oxford East and Oxford West & Abingdon constituencies:

- a) *To stand up for local government, campaigning for proper funding and devolution of both powers and budgets to a local level*
- b) *to pledge to build the affordable homes that are desperately needed in Oxford and the surrounding area*
- c) to support our schools, *colleges* and universities
- d) to back a vibrant low carbon economy
- e) *to commit to a national Living Wage and the Oxford Living Wage*
- f) to promote an international, safe and tolerant city.

We expect those elected to represent Oxford in the House of Commons to fight for a fairer, greener and even more beautiful city for all.

2. Housing (proposed by Cllr Fooks, seconded by Cllr Wade)

Liberal Democrats member motion

Council notes the increasing disparity in housing costs between the social housing sector and the private sector. This risks Oxford becoming a city of only the very well-off and the not-at-all well-off, with no housing within reach of middle income households. Key workers such as teachers and nurses can no longer afford to live in Oxford, and communities become unbalanced.

Council asks the Executive Board to ask officers to investigate new models of housing provision which would include starter homes, key worker housing and self-build in any new developments. This is likely to require the setting up of a separate housing company.

Council recognises the concerns of neighbouring districts over proposals to build on green belt land outside the City and asks the Oxfordshire Growth Board to ensure that the current Green Belt Review is thorough, transparent and involves proper public consultation.

Dialogue with the county and the districts must continue.

Council recognises that the current jobs/homes imbalance – 46,000 people commuting in every day – will get worse with the thousands of new jobs expected in the City. Council asks the Administration to work with the County Council as the Highway Authority to ensure that the provision of excellent public transport links is fully recognised in LTP4.

Amended motion proposed by Councillor Seamons (amendments in italics)

Council notes the increasing disparity in housing costs between the social housing sector and the private sector. This risks Oxford becoming a city of only the very well-off and the not-at-all well-off, with no housing within reach of middle income households. Key workers such as teachers and nurses can no longer afford to live in Oxford, and communities become unbalanced.

Council asks the Executive Board to ask officers to investigate new models of housing provision which would include starter homes, key worker housing and self-build in any new developments.

[delete remaining text in the original motion and replace with]

Oxford also believes that more social housing has a substantial role to play in meeting this housing need, and rejects the Governments movement to unaffordable 'affordable rent'.

Council repeats its call for an urgent Green Belt review which represents Oxford's only realistic way of meeting its housing needs. Of course council recognises the concerns of neighbouring authorities and the need to continue open dialogue but the results of the abandonment of regional planning through the former LEAs has been the halting of an urban extension desperately needed for Oxford's extreme housing need. The Council implores an incoming government to return to strategic regional planning and to abandon the failed 'duty to co-operate'.

Council is delighted by the thousands of new jobs expected in the City including those as a consequence of the City Deal, the coming new Westgate Centre and proposed Northern Gateway development. However the Council recognises the current jobs/homes imbalance – 46,000 people commuting in every day and the twin demands this makes for more homes, and the encouragement of sustainable transport. Council asks the Administration to work with the County Council as the Highway Authority to ensure that the provision of excellent public transport links is fully recognised in LTP4.

3. Controlling the Housing Investment Market (proposed by Cllr Hollick, seconded by Cllr Brandt) Green member motion

This Council notes that housing rents in Oxford are some of the highest in the Country. That increasing numbers of new and converted properties are being purchased by buy-to-let landlords and overseas investors who are being attracted to Oxford because of the high returns. With high housing demand, this is leading to a spiral of rent increases as these property owners seek to maximise returns. In addition, the rising number of investment properties is increasing the price, and reducing the number, of properties for private sale.

This Council therefore calls on the incoming Government to act decisively and quickly to better control the housing investment market for example, through reductions in the tax relief given to buy-to-let landlords, the introduction of local rent controls and more flexibility on how Council Tax is levied.

Amended motion proposed by Councillor Seamons (amendments in italics)

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[delete remaining text in the original motion and replace with]

It is not only high rents that lead to dissatisfaction with the rental market but the instability felt by Oxford's private renting citizens, many of whom are families. Short-assured tenancies of 6 or 12 months mean tenants unable to put down roots, decorate their homes or have stability in school or work. There is also a need to raise standards across the private rented sector, where because of high demand poor quality housing has been let for too long. In addition, the rising number of investment properties is increasing the price, and reducing the number, of properties for private sale.

This Council therefore calls on the incoming Government to act decisively in introducing and normalising longer term tenancies of 3 years, with restricted rent rises in that term. The council also backs plans to ban expensive letting agent fees which limit access to the rented sector. The council also calls on an incoming government to do more to support council's looking to set up local licensing schemes to drive up standards, such as the HMO licensing scheme in Oxford. Councils are capable of enforcing improved standards in the sector but are held back from introducing schemes by unnecessary bureaucratic barriers. The incoming Government should also carefully consider further measures, including the tax relief given to buy-to-let landlords and the introduction of rent controls, weighing up the pressures of increasing rents and prices, while supporting those who are vulnerable or in most acute housing need.

To improve access to home ownership for local people, the council's planning officers have been directed to seek agreement with developers to market properties solely to local people/organisations for the first few months of a sale. Finally, the Council backs plans for a Mansion Tax so that those who benefit most from housing wealth pay a greater share in society, but an incoming government could go further in this regard by giving local authorities more flexibility on how council tax is levied.

4. Encouraging collaboration for action on cancer (proposed by Cllr Coulter, seconded by Cllr Lygo)

Labour member motion

Oxford City Council congratulates each of the organisations meeting together at Oxford Town Hall on 4 February to Mark "World Cancer Day". Council thanks each of those organisations for providing advocacy, for highlighting the suffering caused by cancer, and for providing hope through the development of innovative treatments and supportive care - all of which is centred on improving outcomes for patients, their families and their carers.

Each year, 8.2 million die worldwide from cancer. Four million die prematurely. And, one out of every two of us will experience painful illness through cancer.

Oxford has a significant role in medical science and in cancer research, with 450 post-doctoral researchers working on cancer related investigations - bringing £22 million to our local economy and with the likelihood such work will expand, for example, with the Churchill Hospital's recognition as a lead centre for targeted cancer therapy.

Oxford City Council resolves to support "World Cancer Day" as an annual event and will seek to find cost effective ways to work with the charitable, voluntary and academic communities and organisations for improved outcomes for cancer sufferers, their families and their carers.

5. Trident (proposed by Cllr Wolff seconded by Cllr Thomas) Green member motion

Council notes that the current government is in favour of replacing Trident at a cost of around £100 billion. According to estimates by CND, this money would be enough to fully fund A&E services for 40 years, employ 150,000 new nurses, build 1.5 million affordable homes, build 30,000 new primary schools, or cover tuition fees for 4 million students.

Council also notes that the Defence Review in 2016 will provide the incoming Government with an historic opportunity to re-consider the UK's nuclear weapons programme.

Particularly at time when funding for the NHS, Council Housing and Education is subject to austerity cuts, this Council believes that the Trident and Trident nuclear replacement programme funding could be much better utilised for the benefit of all and therefore the programme should be scrapped.

Council therefore agrees to ask the leader to write to all the City and County MPs after the election asking them to back the scrapping of Trident and any replacement.

6. Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (proposed by Cllr Tanner) Labour member motion

The City Council welcomes the County Council's new transport strategy for Oxford as far as it goes but believes a number of key improvements are needed. We endorse the submission from the City Council about the OTS. In particular we believe that:

1) Tunnelling under the centre of Oxford is a costly nonsense which will damage the beautiful heart of Oxford and destroy archaeology.

2) The County are right about the increase in journeys in future but the Rapid Transit Buses (RTB) they propose will not provide the number of extra buses and seats that are needed.

3) The new Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) does not make it clear which modes of transport should have most priority. We want to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and buses especially during rush hours.

4) The City Council wants a speedy end to the effective moratorium on urgently needed improvements for cyclists on Oxford's roads.

5) The City Council supports the same balanced transport policy for the Headington hospitals and the Cowley business park, that has operated successfully for the city centre for many years. At present very many people who work in the eastern arc have little choice but to drive.

6) The County's latest OTS has failed to indicate sensible routes for the RTBs. Using crowded roads Like the Cowley Road and London Road, or driving a bus lane across a golf course in Lye Valley, are unworkable.

7) The City Council will continue to keep open its Park & Rides (P & R) in the city. Indeed we want to expand Seacourt P & R. But we also support more Park & Rides beyond Oxford in addition.

8) We support some ideas in the OTS such as more electric vehicles, cleaner air, a passenger rail link to Cowley and consulting about a work-place parking levy. We are opposed to road pricing as an unworkable burden on car drivers and businesses.

Amendments proposed by Councillor Wolff seconded by Councillor Thomas

Add to the end of point 2) *“Furthermore, the existing roads on the proposed RTB routes will probably have to be completely rebuilt to cope with them. Council believes that, instead of RTB, the practical feasibility of trams should be given serious consideration.”*

Amend 8) to delete final sentence and replace with *“We believe that an inner city congestion charge should be consulted upon if the proposed zero emission zone fails to materialise or proves insufficient to address Citywide air quality issues.”*

Add additional point 9) *“We are also concerned that the OTS does not properly consider carbon dioxide emissions which will increase under the proposed future transport scenarios.”*

Supporting Note to point 9). This is due to the increased number of commuter journeys and the unambitious aim of the OTS to stabilise rather than reduce the number of journeys by car.

Motion as amended

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needed. We endorse the submission from the City Council about the OTS. In particular we believe that:

- 1) Tunnelling under the centre of Oxford is a costly nonsense which will damage the beautiful heart of Oxford and destroy archaeology.
- 2) The County are right about the increase in journeys in future but the Rapid Transit Buses (RTB) they propose will not provide the number of extra buses and seats that are needed. *Furthermore, the existing roads on the proposed RTB routes will probably have to be completely rebuilt to cope with them. Council believes that, instead of RTB, the practical feasibility of trams should be given serious consideration.*
- 3) The new Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) does not make it clear which modes of transport should have most priority. We want to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and buses especially during rush hours.
- 4) The City Council wants a speedy end to the effective moratorium on urgently needed improvements for cyclists on Oxford's roads.
- 5) The City Council supports the same balanced transport policy for the Headington hospitals and the Cowley business park, that has operated successfully for the city centre for many years. At present very many people who work in the eastern arc have little choice but to drive.
- 6) The County's latest OTS has failed to indicate sensible routes for the RTBs. Using crowded roads Like the Cowley Road and London Road, or driving a bus lane across a golf course in Lye Valley, are unworkable.
- 7) The City Council will continue to keep open its Park & Rides (P & R) in the city. Indeed we want to expand Seacourt P & R. But we also support more Park & Rides beyond Oxford in addition.
- 8) We support some ideas in the OTS such as more electric vehicles, cleaner air, a passenger rail link to Cowley and consulting about a work-place parking levy. *We believe that an inner city congestion charge should be consulted upon if the proposed zero emission zone fails to materialise or proves insufficient to address Citywide air quality issues.*
- 9) *We are also concerned that the OTS does not properly consider carbon dioxide emissions which will increase under the proposed future transport scenarios.*

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