

# **COUNCIL**

**Monday 14 April 2014**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Sinclair (Lord Mayor), Abbasi (Sheriff), Brett (Deputy Lord Mayor), Altaf-Khan, Baxter, Benjamin, Brown, Campbell, Canning, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Darke, Fooks, Fry, Goddard, Haines, Hollick, Humberstone, Jones, Kennedy, Khan, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Mills, O'Hara, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Rundle, Sanders, Seamons, Simmons, Smith, Tanner, Turner, Van Nooijen, Wilkinson, Williams and Wolff.

## **101. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beverley Clack, Michael Gotch, Sajjid Malik and Louise Upton.

## **102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

## **103. MINUTES**

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

## **104. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

No appointments to Committees were made.

## **105. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Dee Sinclair made the following announcements:

- (1) A special meeting of Council would be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 to confer the Freedom of the City on Christopher Brown.
- (2) Lois Stock, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer in Law and Governance was leaving the Council after eight years with the Council, and wished her well for the future.
- (3) The following Councillors would not be seeking re-election at the forthcoming local elections in May:
  - Councillor Jim Campbell – Elected in May 1995
  - Councillor John Goddard – Elected in May 1998
  - Councillor Shah Jahan-Khan – Elected in May 2006
  - Councillor Mark Mills – Elected in June 2008
  - Councillor David Rundle – Election in May 2002

Council thanked them for their service and wished them well for the future.

- (4) Councillor Val Smith was welcomed back to Council following her recent absence due to ill health and Council noted that Councillor Michael Gotch was recovering well from a recent operation.
- (5) The recent Lord Mayors Charity Dinner raised over £4,000 towards the Lord Mayors charities.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bob Price said that the Council had been shortlisted in the Municipal Journal Awards for Best Achieving Council in 2014. Judging would take place on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014 with the winner announced in June 2014.

## **106. PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING**

Harry Jenkins addressed Council. The full text of his address is appended to these minutes.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.10(g) the address was considered with agenda item 17(2) Motions on Notice – Isolation and Loneliness in our city (minute 117 refers).

## **107. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) 2014 - EMPLOYER DECISIONS ON DISCRETIONS AND REVIEW OF OTHER EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

The Head of Human Resources and Facilities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which required the Council to make decisions about various matters relating to the application of the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS). These are in place for the current scheme as previously agreed by Council. As the new LGPS came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, these discretions needed to be reviewed in that context. A number of other existing employment policies had also been reviewed in consultation with both trade unions and revisions proposed.

Council agreed:

- (1) To approve the employer discretions under the LGPS and other pension related Regulations as recommended in Appendices 1 and 2 with retrospective effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.
- (2) To approve the revisions to the employment policies as summarised in the body of the report and to authorise the Head of Human Resources and Facilities to amend the policies in accordance with those described changes and to promote/implement the revised policies on a date to be fixed by him.
- (3) To authorise the Head of Human Resources and Facilities to amend the policies from time to time in order to correct any factual or legal errors.

## **108. OXFORD CITY COUNCILS REPORT ON ITS INVOLVEMENT IN TACKLING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

The Executive Director for Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which reported on the Councils involvement in tackling child sexual exploitation.

Councillor Pat Kennedy, Board Member, Education, Crime and Community Safety, moved the report.

Council agreed to note the report.

## **109. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) the purpose of which was to report to Council on the application of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

Council agreed to note the Council's use of its powers under the Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

## **110. CONSTITUTION REVIEW 2014**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which recommended changes to the Council's constitution to reflect changes in the law and to provide clarification.

During the debate the following points/additions were raised:

- (1) Contract Rules – Paragraph 19.10 Clauses that must be included in contracts over £100,000 – Inclusion of a requirement seeking a commitment from a contractor to pay its employees the Oxford living wage, was welcomed, but should this also be required on contracts below £100,000.
- (2) Planning Code of Practice – Paragraph 24.3 – Preparation of Planning Policy Documents – Public Meetings – The contents of this paragraph would be reflected in the Planning Code of Practice.
- (3) Planning Code of Practice – Paragraph 24.15 – Site Visits – In the sixth paragraph, last line, replace the word “should” with the word “must”.
- (4) Other Committee Procedures – Paragraph 14.9 – Area Planning Committees and Planning Review Committee – Insert the word “not” between the words “can” and “be” in the first line of sub-paragraph (a)

Council agreed to approve the amendments to the constitution as outlined in appendices 1 to 5 of the report and subject to points (1) to (4) above being clarified and where appropriate included.

## 111. CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

Council had before it minutes of the City Executive Board as follows:

- (a) 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014
- (b) 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014
- (c) 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014

### City Executive Board – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014

- (a) Minute 137 – Covered Market Strategy – Councillor Jim Campbell welcomed the appointment of the new manager. He asked if it was still the case that if the traders did not accept the 20% increase, would the Council still go to arbitration.

In response Councillor Bob Price said that he was happy to meet with the traders to discuss the issues further.

### City Executive Board – 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014

- (b) Minute 167 – Fusion Lifestyle – Annual Service Plan 2014/15 – Councillor Craig Simmons said that he was concerned that the Scrutiny recommendation on funds being used to improve facilities had not be taken. He said that he could not see the income stream that Fusion would be using to repay the loan from the council.

In response Councillor Mike Rowley said that Officers would be looking at this.

- (c) Minute 169 – Saving Community Public Houses. Councillor Elise Benjamin asked if the Board Member would consider adding CAMRA to the list of consultees.

In response Councillor Colin Cook, declined to reconsider.

## 112. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

- (1) **Question to the Board Member, Benefits and Customer Services (Councillor Susan Brown) from Councillor Sam Hollick**

### Discretionary Housing Payments

Is the board member disappointed that the council will be returning money to the government that could have been spent on Discretionary Housing Payments to help people who are being charged unaffordable rents?

**Response:** I am very disappointed for residents in this city that the government has chosen to penalise people on low wages, tenants in

private rented housing, people with disabilities and people whom the government in its wisdom have decided have too many bedrooms.

I am also very disappointed that the government thinks that giving councils a budget that it will not commit to beyond a year called 'discretionary housing payment' which is only designed to be given as a temporary measure to local residents in order to 'wean' them off benefits will materially improve the lot of many of the city's residents.

In the light of these policies I commend the excellent work of the council's welfare reform team who have worked hard to ensure that as many people as possible who have been affected by the government's benefit changes have been alerted to the possibility of using discretionary housing payments as a temporary measure to help them bridge the gap between their income and their outgoings, of which in this city where housing is so expensive, rent is a major factor. I also note that 80% of applicants have been successful in their application for discretionary housing payment .

I regret the fact that the government has done nothing to tackle the real cause of the rising benefit bill in Oxford which is the catastrophic rise in the cost of housing owing to the restrictions placed on the city's need to develop.

A robust and extensive process was undertaken to ensure maximum take-up and award, including:

- All tenants affected by the bedroom tax being written to offering support;
- All residents impacted by the Benefit Cap being phoned, and letters sent when there was no contact to offer support; and
- Promotion of DHP internally to Housing, Benefits, Rents, Revenues and Customer Contact teams and externally to Housing and Voluntary Groups including advice agencies, housing associations, and organisations providing housing support or support to specific interest groups.

Compared to previous years, the amount of DHP awarded is double that granted in 2012/13 and more than three times that awarded in 2011/12 and 2010/11 and the City Council has spent 82% of the budget. This is in spite of the fact that the Universal Credit which the government had said would be introduced this year has been postponed, so the council has not seen the number of claims it expected to see this compared to previous years, the amount of DHP awarded is double that granted in 2012/13 and more than three times that awarded in 2011/12 and 2010/11.

This is in spite of the fact that the Universal Credit which the government had said would be introduced this year has been postponed, so the council has not seen any claims as anticipated for this benefit cut and yet it has still spent 82% of the grant for this year.

Councillor Sam Hollick in a supplementary question said that it was strange to be moving people out of Oxford and why could we not help them.

In response Councillor Susan Brown said that 80% of applicants received the payment when they applied. The main issues was that the Universal Credit was imminent and it was not possible to support everyone who had

a shortfall in rent who were in the private rented sector and this was the outcome of the Government's policy. The Council was trying its best, but we could not use the DHP to plug the huge black hole.

**(2) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Elise Benjamin**

New Independent Planning design Panel

Greens welcome the new independent planning Design Panel post-Roger Dudman Way, but with the controversial Blavatnik Building, the former Ruskin extension and Westgate outline all being given permission what priorities does the Portfolio Holder believe the new Design Panel should have?

**Response:** The aim of the Oxford Design Review Panel is to produce reports which will assist and encourage potential developers / applicants to achieve and maintain high quality designs for their proposals. The advice should make clear whether the panel supports the proposal or finds fundamental flaws. The report is likely to contain appropriate praise as well as criticism. It will also explain what actions the panel are expecting the developer / applicant to take to address any concerns.

In addition, the contents of the most recent Design Review Report for a scheme will be reported to the Planning Committee through the planning case officer's report on the proposal. The advice will be a material planning consideration. It will remain the role of the planning committee to give consideration to all material planning considerations, to consider what weight to give to each, and to reach its own decision on the merits of the application.

Councillor Elise Benjamin in a supplementary question asked if the full report would be reported back. In response Councillor Colin Cook said that it depended on the application, but expected it to be available via the website.

**(3) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor David Williams**

Mitigation of visual impact of Oxford University Graduate Buildings, Roger Dudman Way

In the light of the findings of the Independent Report into the flaws, errors and limitations in the planning processes around the approval given to the damaging and highly controversial Roger Dudman Way Oxford University graduate buildings, what mitigating measures are being taken to ensure that the visual impact of the buildings are reduced?

**Response:** The University of Oxford has agreed to prepare a voluntary Environmental Statement, which will indicate mitigation measure that it proposes should be made together with an assessment of the effectiveness of each. Once the City Council receives this voluntary Environmental Statement it will be published for public consultation. The City Council will subsequently give consideration to the mitigation being proposed and to all

comments that it has received. At this stage options for action available to the City Council can be assessed and appropriate decisions taken.

**(4) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor David Williams**

Late night levy

In the light of the decision by Newcastle, and now Cheltenham, Council to introduce a 'late night levy', with Southampton, Plymouth, Leeds and York considering the matter, will the Portfolio Holder re-consider the decision not to implement the levy in Oxford – which could raise £50,000 towards community support officers.

**Response:** The late night levy was reviewed during a Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee meeting. The Licensing Manager had mapped the anticipated income from such a scheme (Councils receive 30% of any levy income) and the actual figure that the Council would be likely to receive from the venues that were licensed and would fall currently within the scope of the levy was approximately just over £30,000.

It should be noted that any monies received by a Licensing Authority must be reinvested in the night time economy (less the costs of administering the levy itself). The Police would receive 70% of the levy income, approximately half the cost of a police officer salary. The impact the monies the Police would receive may not meet with the expectations held by the public should a levy be charged.

This Authority has not rejected ever introducing the levy, rather we have agreed to see how the national picture maps out, what legal issues may arise elsewhere through the introduction of the levy, maintain a watching brief through our regular reports from officers, and remain flexible to a request for a levy should a robust case be made to introduce the scheme.

There are two Special Saturation Policies in place which allow the Licensing Authority to manage the late night economy with our Partners and the members of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee. These policies work very well, and are widely supported leading Oxford to be regarded as a safe city. The night time economy is well policed, and also enhanced by the frequent and highly visible enforcement operations carried out by our own Licensing Team. It is unclear how a Late Night Levy would impact upon the Special Saturation Policy.

Two councils have adopted the levy, Newcastle would receive a highly significant income from the levy due to there being such a vast number of licensed premises trading during the relevant hours that a levy may be applied. How successful Cheltenham will be is of interest and time will tell whether that decision was wise.

A small number of other Councils are considering the levy, however, on the basis that there are 361 local authorities nationally. A significant number of councils have not taken this option, either due to the income that would be generated not being sufficient to meet with the expectations of the public at large, and as such place a reputational risk on the council; or they have

adopted our stance and are waiting to see what the national picture becomes before reviewing the matter further.

Councillor David Williams in a supplementary question asked how long we would have to wait to see it introduced. In response Councillor Colin Cook said that we were waiting to see what other Local Authorities did first.

**(5) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor John Goddard**

Pear Tree Park and Ride siting

Does the Executive member agree that in the new era of growth that is now planned for the City and the County that the Pear Tree Park and Ride site is badly placed and should be moved to a more strategic position further north where it would not pull into the city traffic that does not need to be there and that this would release the current site for more productive use for employment and housing?

**Response:** The City Council has been working closely with the County Council as highway authority to assess the detailed traffic implications of the Core Strategy proposal for the Northern Gateway site. It has recently consulted on the Area Action Plan Options. Part of this work is to consider the appropriate car parking arrangements both for Park & Ride and to service the mixed housing and commercial developments. In addition the County Council has recently commissioned a North Oxford Transport Strategy which has a wider scope than just the Northern Gateway, but stretches north to Kidlington and West to Eynsham.

I maintain an open mind on the sagacity of Cllr Goddard's suggestion for the relocation of the Pear Tree Park & Ride and will await the outcome of the North Oxford Transport Strategy and Northern Gateway consultation before coming to a view. However I will ask that both City and County Officers give this idea careful consideration.

Councillor John Goddard in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that the suggestion had received wide support from the various stakeholders and the Bus Companies. In response Councillor Colin Cook said that we should await the response from City and County officers.

**(6) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Craig Simmons**

Sale of crustaceans in the Covered Market

I understand that live crustaceans (lobsters and crabs) are now being sold in Oxford Covered Market. According to RSPCA guidelines, crustaceans should not be kept in strong light or noisy conditions, and they should be killed only by trained personnel. Can the portfolio holder confirm whether these guidelines are being complied with?

**Response:** Responsibility for the enforcement of animal welfare matters in retail premises lies with the County Council's Trading Standards



department, DEFRA and the Police. In the Council's role as landlord we will support the enforcement agencies if there are concerns over animal welfare at any Covered Market premise.

Councillor Craig Simmons in a supplementary question asked if the Council would be more proactive and actually report any breaches. In response Councillor Cook said that there were no powers of compulsion on this.

**(7) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Tony Brett**

Welfare standards for the sale of live crustaceans

Can you tell me what measures are taken by your administration to ensure appropriate welfare standards are being met for the keeping, and selling of live crustaceans, in the Covered Market? How do you ensure that crustaceans are being killed humanely either before or after sale?

**Response:** Responsibility for the enforcement of animal welfare matters in retail premises lies with the County Council's Trading Standards department, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (DEFRA), and the Police. In the Council's role as landlord we will support the enforcement agencies if there are concerns over animal welfare at any premises in the Covered Market.

**(8) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Tony Brett**

Covered Market Manager

We know how important the Covered Market is to you and to your colleagues, and how keen you are to support it by buying cheese there. Can you tell us who has been offered the post of Market Manager, a bit about their relevant experience? What do you hope they will be able to achieve in their first three months in post, and then the rest of the year for which the post is initially planned?

**Response:** It would be unfair to give Council the impression that I only buy cheese at the Covered Market. I also buy meat, bread, cakes, picture frame mounts, and recently a new watch. I eat in the cafés and have my hair cut at the barbers.

We are pleased to confirm that Elaine Phipp has been offered the post of Markets' Manager for the Covered Market. She has an extensive experience in the retail sector and has successfully implemented and managed key projects within retail groups including Whittard of Chelsea, Newby, Homebase and Wedgewood. She was the unanimous choice of the interview panel which included Councillors Campbell and Lygo, as well as union and trader representatives. The first three months will involve agreeing a short and medium term action plan as well as reviewing operations and management of the market. She will be liaising closely with the traders and others to implement the adopted Covered Market strategy which has been endorsed by the Council and traders. Elaine will be

expected to provide marketing and retail support across both the Covered Market and Gloucester Green markets.

Councillor Tony Brett in a supplementary question asked why the Board Member had not been at the interview as well as the Service Head. In response Councillor Colin Cook said that he was unable to attend due to work commitments.

**(9) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Tony Brett**

Private hire vehicles

Can you, as Chair of the committee that licences private hire vehicles, explain why there appears to be a sudden influx of licenced vehicles being used for private hire in our City that have been licenced (sometimes as hackney carriages) by other neighbouring licensing authorities? Do you share my regret that your administration's recent imposition of draconian standards and age limits on private hire vehicles in our City has actually had the reverse effect to that intended, by bringing in an influx of vehicles licenced outside our City, that have to reach much lower standards? For example many vehicles on private hire jobs no longer have their numbers on their sides and other licencing authorities license plates are much smaller, so hard to see from any distance.

**Response:** The vehicles seen licensed by other Authorities are not Private Hire Vehicles, but Hackney Carriages, this is a very important point of law. The current laws relating to taxis and private hire do not prohibit a Private Hire Operator from one district from sub-contracting a booking to a Hackney Carriage licensed by another district, hence the wide variety in standards Councillor Brett mentions.

However, there will be no vehicle age limits in place in Oxford until January 2016, and the criteria for licensed vehicles in Oxford has not changed since 2006 in terms of the need to maintain a vehicle. In order to ensure a transparent yet ever forward progression of the licensed fleet, age limits are to commence with effect from 2016 which embrace both emissions within our great City, and advancements in vehicle safety technology.

In order to address the concerns raised, discussions have and continue to take place with neighbouring districts in relation to their Hackney Carriages and the use to which they are put. Appropriate countywide enforcement operations and procedures are in place to deal with any out of district Hackney Carriages that may be plying for hire in Oxford.

It should be noted that there is nothing to prevent the large Private Hire Operators in Oxford from having a wider presence through Oxfordshire and beyond, and there is nothing to prevent those other districts' Hackney Carriages from linking with our Operators to ensure that the demand for taxis and private hire are met. The criteria for licensed vehicles set by some of our neighbours is not always as high as that of Oxford, our Licensing Team are working with the other districts in order to assist them to aspire to our high standards.

This is a nationwide issue, not just an issue for Oxford, and our Licensing Manager has raised our concerns to the Home Office and Local Government Association, in order that the authorities who seek to have high standards are seen to be the standard that other authorities should look to adopt, in order that the services provided to the public are consistent nationally.

**(10) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Jean Fooks**

Provision of transport for the elderly and disabled of Oxford

When will you be announcing how you intend to use the Fifty Thousand Pounds held in Contingencies for the provision of transport for the elderly and disabled of Oxford?

**Response:** We have been in talks with the County and have done some analysis of needs and they have reviewed the system. This suggests a shortfall on certain days in the City. However, the County believes that the service provision is not currently optimised so we are waiting for the outcomes of the changes they have proposed about access to the service and the booking system before committing the money. The County are about to review the whole scheme and we have asked to be part of that to understand better the needs on the city and how we might contribute in a cost effective way.

Councillor Jean Fooks in a supplementary question asked if the outcome of the review could be reported back to Council. In response Councillor Colin Cook said yes.

**(11) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Jean Fooks**

Air Quality Action Plan – Good Planning Guidance

The City Council has adopted an Air Quality Action Plan to reduce the health-threatening pollution experienced in many parts of the city; in particular to reduce the concentrations of transport-related NOx and PM (particulates) by 50% from 2005 levels by 2020. There is an excellent Low Emission Strategy in place. With major construction and traffic-generating schemes being proposed, such as at the Westgate and Northern Gateway sites, would you now ask officers to develop Good Practice Planning Guidance linked to these documents, as has been done in other local authorities?

**Response:** I agree that this is an excellent Low Emissions Strategy and I will ask officers to find out what planning guidance has been prepared by other local authorities to find out what can be learnt from them.

Councillor Jean Fooks in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member could move quickly to discover the guidance that the Council should use.

**(12) Question to the Board Member, Parks and Sports (Councillor Mark Lygo) from Councillor Tony Brett**

Parking costs at the Ice Rink

I know how keen you are to encourage sport in our City and that's an admirable aim. Can you tell Council why parking at Oxford's ice rink is the most expensive in our Country and why the concessionary hour between 8am and 9am for those arriving before 8am (and thus having to pay the £2.50 night charge) has recently been removed, thus making it more expensive to park, say, for an hour between 7.30am to 8.30am (a night charge of £2.50 night charge plus an hour from 8am-9am at £2.50, when the normal 2-hour charge is £4.10) than it is for any other two-hour period in the day or night? Do you think this is fair on young skaters and their parents who are currently travelling, often daily, to Oxford to practice while the main rink at Milton Keynes is being refurbished?

**Response:** The Oxpens car park is a City Centre car park and the tariff structure is similar to all other City Centre car parks. The Council has a 24 hour tariff structure. There is an evening tariff which operates between 2000 and 0800 hours. The tariff for this period was £2.50 for 2013/14 (£3.00 from 01.04.14). There is a concession period between 0700 and 0800 during which time a customer will obtain a full hour's parking. This concession period remains in place. Our signage clearly states the tariff structure. There has not been a concessionary period between the hours of 0800 and 0900 for at least the past five years.

We are keen to encourage Ice Rink usage and we have offered a permit system to the Ice Hockey Club for members which effectively provides a 25% discount from the normal tariff price. This will enable the Ice Hockey Club to issue these to regular members.

Councillor Tony Brett in a supplementary question asked if any consideration had been given to users from for example Milton Keynes. In response Councillor Mark Lygo said that he would meet with the User Group and Fusion to consider a way forward.

**(13) Question to the Board Member, Leisure (Councillor Mike Rowley) from Councillor Craig Simmons**

Community bid for Temple Cowley Pools

Can the Portfolio Holder update us on the status of the community bid for the Temple Cowley Pool site.

**Response:** The marketing deadline for the sale of the Temple Cowley Pool site has been extended to Wednesday 16th April to enable all interested parties to bid. In addition, the Council has accepted the registration of the site as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011. This will trigger a moratorium, initially six weeks with the potential to be extended to six months if a qualifying preferred bidder comes forward.

All interested parties have been and will continue to be kept informed of the process.

The Council has an obligation to obtain best value for the public (judged on quality as well as price) and judgement will be made on that basis.

Councillor Craig Simmons in a supplementary question asked what were the time scales, and what was a preferred bidder? In response Councillor Mike Rowley said that Under the Localism Act, Members can state six weeks when a valid bid can be made. If a valid bid is made there is a further six month period of grace for the bidder to raise the money. During this time no sale can take place. He added though that the Council was under no obligation to accept any bid.

**(14) Question to the Board Member, Housing (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Elise Benjamin**

Social Housing – Westgate development

Is Councillor Seamons aware of the reasons given for not including social housing on the site of the expanded Westgate Centre?

**Response:** Whilst no formal decision has been reached on whether an off-site contribution to affordable housing would be accepted instead of on-site provision, I am aware of the reasons why this was suggested as the approach at the outline planning phase.

Both options would be in accordance with the Council's Affordable Housing SPD adopted by CEB in September 2013 and that document details when such a contribution would be appropriate. In short, where a development's on-site provision of affordable homes cannot best meet the City's housing need the Council may choose to accept a financial contribution to fund better alternative affordable homes elsewhere, for example at Oxpens.

A formal decision will be reached by the West Area Planning Committee when it meets to review the detailed plans for the development.

Councillor Elise Benjamin in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member agreed that the Council should maximise all affordable housing. In response Councillor Scott Seamons said yes.

**(15) Question to the Board Member, Housing (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Elise Benjamin**

Affordable Housing – Westgate development

Point 146 of the Westgate planning report states that "...policy CS24 of the Core Strategy requires 50% of the dwellings on site to be affordable whilst policy WE16 of the West End AAP and policy HP3 of the Sites and Housing Plan also require a tenure mix of 80% social rented and 20% shared ownership...". Does Councillor Seamons agree that allowing planning permission without complying with the Council's own planning policy, allowing it within days of Oxford being rated as the least affordable place in the UK, and allowing this to happen on Council land, is shameful?

**Response:** No, accepting an off-site financial contribution to affordable housing would be in compliance with our planning policy as set out in the Affordable Housing SPD adopted last year. I refer the councillor to the report on the Westgate development to the West Area Planning Committee and the section which sets this out, and the officer recommendation why the payment of an off-site contribution would be appropriate in these circumstances. A decision will only be formally reached when the detailed planning application is considered by a future meeting of that committee.

The Council has an excellent record in delivering affordable housing on land it owns. Our affordable homes programme is delivering over 500 new Council houses over the next five years and we will be bidding for more funding for more Council housing through the new City Deal and the Homes and Communities Agency. The Council's planning team recently received a national award for delivering planning permissions for over a hundred new Council houses under the Affordable Homes Programme.

Councillor Elise Benjamin in a supplementary question asked if the Council should prevent ghettoization. In response Councillor Scott Seamons said yes.

**(16) Question to the Board Member, Housing (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Elise Benjamin**

Affordable housing provision

Point 147 of the Westgate planning report that went to West Area Planning Committee on 11th March states, in relation to affordable housing provision, that "In consultation with colleagues within the Council's Housing Services however it emerges that neither of the two possible sites for affordable housing are ideal for this type of accommodation." It then explains that one location, to the east side of Old Greyfriars Street, "...would be constrained by the need to accommodate commercial floor space within this block to its rear." and that balconies would "...directly overlook the proposed service access and taxi rank." Would Councillor Seamons agree with me that there is something seriously wrong with a development that can somehow accommodate private housing but apparently can't find any suitable locations for affordable housing?

**Response:** No, more accurately there would be something seriously wrong if the Council required the provision of affordable housing in developments, which due to design or location, would not adequately meet the needs of those in desperate housing need on our register. In those limited circumstances it would be quite appropriate to accept a financial contribution instead as set out in our planning policies.

There is private housing demand for small, single aspect flats above retailing and leisure uses in the city centre-even if its environment is affected by a day and nighttime economy and traffic. But such housing is unlikely to be suitable for many of our high priority housing applicants, such as families, the vulnerable and the elderly-as our Housing Service has made clear.

An off-site financial contribution would allow the right affordable housing for those in greatest need, for example in the wider West End area action plan area at Oxpens, and would be in accordance with the Council's Balance of Dwellings policy.

Councillor Elise Benjamin in a supplementary question asked why there was no affordable housing in the Westgate redevelopment. In response Councillor Scott Seamons said that this stage of the process had not yet been reached.

**(17) Question to the Board Member, Housing (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Elise Benjamin**

Westgate Development – Unaffordable service charges

Point 148 of the Westgate planning report, when dealing with why it is not possible to accommodate affordable housing on site, states that the second possible location at block 1A is not suitable because "...as the block is likely to be built to a high specification to maximise values, the level of service charges which would have to be set would make rented and shared ownership units alike unaffordable." Does Councillor Seamons agree that this reference to unaffordable service charges is an embarrassment to a City Council that professes to care about those in housing need?

**Response:** It is a fact that mixed use high specification developments incur high service costs for lift servicing, more complex door entry systems and high maintenance and decoration costs. Many of these higher costs are associated with the location of this particular residential development which shares a fabric with retail and restaurant uses. Passing these costs onto affordable housing tenants, who are on low incomes or in vulnerable groups, would be inappropriate.

In meeting housing need the council will ensure that new housing whilst still of high quality is low cost to run and best meets the requirements of those who need it. This is in line with the council's wider policy on rents and service charges ensuring fairness in these rates, and keeping costs as low as possible within a prudent housing business plan.

Councillor Elise Benjamin in a supplementary question asked why the service charges could not be set at an affordable level. In response Councillor Scott Seamons said that the development was welcomed and would meet the wider economic goals of the city and would provide jobs and a better retail offer.

**(18) Question to the Board Member, Finance, Efficiency and Strategic Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Sam Hollick**

Landlords Accreditation Scheme

What publicity is planned for the relaunch of the Landlords Accreditation Scheme, and how will you ensure that enough tenants are aware of the scheme for there to be some benefit to people who are renting?

**Response:** As the questioner may know, the Council has just carried out its biggest ever consultation on privately rented housing in Oxford, including the subject of accreditation. We are currently reviewing the feedback, and he can be sure that when the scheme is relaunched, it will be given the fullest publicity, recognising the service provided by landlords and agents who are accredited. At the same time, we need to be realistic about the limits to accreditation - the scarcity of property in Oxford is such that many tenants will end up continuing to rent from landlords who are not accredited, which is why the Council needs to press for homes and management to be of acceptable quality through its statutory powers, as well as using accreditation

Councillor Sam Hollick in a supplementary question asked what was the Council doing to go beyond the statutory powers? In response Councillor Ed Turner said that it was a landlords market in Oxford. Through the HMO licensing scheme standards were being raised. The Council used a light touch approach to landlords who were accredited so that resources could be used to go after those that were not. He added that Letting Agents required firmer regulation.

**(19) Question to the Board Member, Cleaner Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Jean Fooks**

Biomethane gas refuelling station and freight consolidation depot

Now that the County Council has voted to recommend that the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board includes air quality as an outcome indicator in Oxfordshire, and noting that transport is the main source of poor air quality in the city, with freight being the second worst source of pollution after buses, would you insist that

- every effort is made to develop the use of low-pollution fuels in the city, including suggesting that a biomethane gas refuelling station is considered so that the new John Lewis store can use biomethane-fuelled vehicles for their Home Delivery service, as they are doing in Camden?
- all possible efforts should be directed to the establishment of a freight consolidation depot on the edge of the city?

**Response:** Oxford City Council is fully supportive of the use of alternative low emission fuel, as shown from our Air Quality Action Plan (December 2013), which sets out an aim to investigate the feasibility of developing infrastructure to support emerging low or zero emission vehicle technologies.

With specific reference to the Westgate development, a recommendation for a condition has been included which require submission of a Low Emission Strategy at reserved matters stage. It is envisaged that a Low Emission Strategy will be required to consider the use of alternative fuels, such as biomethane.

The City and County Council is currently jointly developing a brief for a freight study, which will report at the end of the summer. The study will



investigate the most appropriate solutions for Oxford in terms of freight management and the development of a consolidation centre will be considered as one of the options.

**(20) Question to the Board Member, Cleaner Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Graham Jones**

Formula for road and pavement repairs

Will he please set out the formula for prioritising and scheduling road and pavement repairs, and say whether it matches the formula used by the County.

**Response:** The prioritising and scheduling of road and pavement schemes is undertaken by the County Council as the Highway Authority. The City submits a bid to the County under the Section 42 framework with a list of priorities based on condition inspections, complaints and claims, however the County Council subsequently undertake a HAMP (Highways Assessment Management Plan) assessment and grade the priorities accordingly.

Councillor Graham Jones in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would speak to Officers and Councillors at the County Council on how the work was better programmed. In response Councillor John Tanner said that having operatives relaying in one area and then moving to another was OK and that he would not be raising this with the County Council.

**(21) Question to the Board Member, Housing (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Sam Hollick**

Bid to the National Affordable Homes Programme

The Housing Strategy Action Plan proposes making a bid for money to build more affordable homes in the second round of the national Affordable Homes Programme. Will the Council be going ahead with a bid to address the shortage of affordable homes in the city?

**Response:** The administration will leave no stone unturned in its desire to expand Oxford's stock of affordable housing, including bids to relevant government funds. Care needs to be taken because sometimes conditions are attached to these funds which may prove unacceptable, however.

**(22) Question to the Board Member, Finance, efficiency and Strategic Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Craig Simmons**

Retail relief scheme for business rates

On 22nd January, the City Executive Board agreed the following Item 133(b): *...to adopt a retail relief scheme for business rates on the terms set out in Paragraph 19 and to delegate the authority to administer the Retail Relief Scheme to the Head of Customer Services in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer.*

Can the Councillor please explain:

- (a) The amount of rate relief given by the Council over the last three years?
- (b) How the new scheme will impact on small local businesses?
- (c) What support is available to small businesses that previously relied on this Relief?
- (d) Whether the Councillor will consider making an exception and grant rate for those businesses affected by the partial closure of St. Clements Car Park?

**Response:**

- (a) The total amount of rate relief given over the current and preceding 3 years to include mandatory charitable relief, discretionary charitable relief and small business rate relief is as follows:
  - 2014/15 – £21,308,017 (not including Retail Rate relief)
  - 2013/14 – £20,397,141
  - 2012/13 – £21,121,368
  - 2011/12 - £18,035,323
- (b) Retail Rate Relief is a new relief. The Government announced in the Autumn statement that it would provide relief of up to £1,000 to all occupied retail properties with a rateable value of £50,000 or less in each of the years 2014/15 and 2015/16. This includes small businesses. This relief has been awarded to 946 businesses to date with a total relief awarded of £901,268.40. The cost is fully reimbursed by Central Government.
- (c) There are a number of other reliefs that small businesses may qualify for. These include:
  - Small Business Rate Relief
  - Rural Rate Relief (we have none in Oxford City Council)
  - Discretionary Charitable Relief
  - Mandatory Charitable Relief

Full details of these reliefs can be found on the Council's website on the "Business Rates Discounts and Exemptions" page.

- (d) Regarding the partial closure of the St Clements Car Park, we have been advised that the Valuation Officer has agreed to recognise the loss of the car park spaces and reduce the rateable value of those shops in St Clements Street, where he believes there has been an impact, by 5%. These reductions will be effective from 8 April 2013 and will be a temporary reduction which will remain in place for the period of the works. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) will write to the ratepayers concerned to advise them of their intended action. Once the work is completed it will be necessary to remove the temporary allowances granted. If the ratepayers are of the view that this allowance is insufficient then they do have the right to submit a formal proposal against the reduced rateable value. For this to be successful they will need to provide evidence to support the view that

the allowances should be greater. The VOA will be endeavouring to get letters out to the ratepayers in the next 10 working days with formal notices of alteration to follow shortly thereafter.

Councillor Craig Simmons in a supplementary question asked if the Council had considered giving some sort of rate relief. In response Councillor Ed Turner said that there were a number of reliefs which could be applied for and any applications would be viewed sympathetically.

**(23) Question to the Board Member, Finance, efficiency and Strategic Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Dick Wolff**

Supermarket Levy

What progress is being made on researching and implementing the 'Supermarket Levy' agreed by Council last November 2013?

**Response:** Officers have met with the pressure group Local Works to investigate the potential to implement this. The Leader of Oxford City Council has notified other council leaders in support of this change that we also support the proposal, and has written on behalf of Local Works to 114 other Labour Council Leaders to seek their support for this campaign. Derby City Council has been proactive in leading on the implementation of a supermarket levy and has recently undertaken four weeks' consultation on the subject, the results of which are being collated. Their intention on the advice of Local Works is to submit an application to Government with the support of other authorities in support, including Oxford City Council.

**(24) Question to the Board Member, Finance, efficiency and Strategic Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Craig Simmons**

Additional community grant

Given the increased pressure on the service, will the Portfolio Holder be giving some of the unallocated, additional community grant agreed at the Budget Council to the Oxford Food Bank as proposed by the Greens in our budget amendment?

**Response:** A process for applying for grants will be set out by the lead City Executive Board Member, Councillor Curran, in this Council year. There will, as always with our grants processes, be a transparent application process with clear assessment criteria. Clearly food banks, of which there are a growing number due to the callous and punitive policies of the coalition government, would be able to apply.

**(25) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Dick Wolff**

Local Authority Co-operative Network

*Background to question. This motion was agreed by general consent on 16th July 2012:*

*'This Council resolves to investigate becoming a member of the Local Authority Co-operative Network and to that end asks the Chief Executive to prepare a report to the City Executive Board in the Autumn illustrating the advantages that may accrue from membership in terms of a range of policies especially in the area of economic development, the creation of local co-operatives and housing trusts.'*

*This Council, moreover, is determined to assist Oxford in becoming a city of co-operatives. To that end, it considers that, alongside investigating membership of the Local Authority Co-operative Network, it is a matter of priority to consider how the Council can support and promote co-operatives and requests that officers and Community and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee investigate all possible means to develop and embed co-operatives further in the fabric of our City's life.'*

*This question was submitted at Council 17th December 2012:*

*As we are now near the end of the UN International Year of Cooperatives, could the Leader tell us what progress has been made in (a) exploring membership of the Local Authority Cooperative Network and (b) investigating means for developing and embedding co-operatives further in the fabric of Oxford life?*

*The Leader's response was:*

*There has not yet been an officer report on this topic to the City Executive Board nor have the Members of the Communities and Partnership prioritised this into their work programme.*

*However, the Council has continued to take practical steps to ensure best value in the widest sense, and to work with social enterprises and not for profit organisations such as the Low Carbon Hub, Groundwork, the Guardian Charity Award winning Aspire, and Fusion Lifestyles. The City Executive Board has also taken account of the potential to weigh social value in awarding contracts in our review of the Council's Procurement Strategy earlier this month.*

*A report of the opportunities offered through cooperative ventures will be commissioned in the New Year.*

The New Year in question (2013) has come and gone, our Local Enterprise Partnership has produced a strategic economic development plan which makes no mention of cooperative enterprise, and the innovative People's Supermarket coop has come and gone with a complete lack of interest and support from the Council. It seems that no investigation has yet been made into the advantages that might accrue from encouraging the development of that distinctive form of enterprise, the cooperative.

(a) Could the Leader say whether he believes that cooperative enterprise is of sufficiently marginal interest to be not worth investigating?

(b) Could the Leader tell us what support his party and its Councillors receive, in gift or kind, from the Cooperative movement?

**Response:** It has not been possible to prioritise policy work on co-operative forms of enterprise due to the demands on the Council's small economic development team of the City Deal, the Superfast Broadband Initiative and the Strategic Economic Plan. I am sorry that this has been the case as I am sure that members of all party groups are strongly supportive of co-ops and other forms of social enterprise, and some are actively involved in the co-operative movement. Cllr Coulter for example chairs the Co-op Party national council. As the answer to a previous question made clear, the Council is closely engaged at an operational level with a range of locally based social enterprises such as the Low Carbon Hub, Groundwork, Aspire and Fusion. I will ask officers to discuss with the new Portfolio holder and the incoming chair of Scrutiny what resource can be allocated to the investigation that was sought in the original motion and to set a time scale for the production of a report to members.

Members of the Co-op Party can seek a small amount of financial support for their election expenses when standing for office. I have no information on any contribution that might be made to the party nationally.

**(26) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Sam Hollick**

Campsfield House

Recently it was reported in the Oxford Times that there are plans to expand the nearby detention centre Campsfield House to double the size. Oxford City Council has long held the position of wanting to see Campsfield closed. Will the leader be writing to Cherwell District Council to restate our ongoing opposition to the existence of Campsfield House, and to formally object to any planning applications that come forward?

**Response:** If a planning application for the expansion of the Campsfield House Detention Centre is submitted to Cherwell DC, the City Council will consider whether there are planning grounds on which a valid objection to the application can be lodged.

**(27) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Williams**

Gladiator Club update

Following the request from the Greens to officers and the Leader to look at the purchase of The Gladiators Club (and the attached housing and workshop space). Will the Leader update me on the status of this matter?

**Response:** Property colleagues have valued the site on the basis of it continuing to provide the current club facilities and it is intended that a bid to purchase the site should be submitted, which, if accepted, will be conditional on the necessary approvals from the City Executive Board and Council. A meeting with the club officers is being set up to discuss the position that has been reached.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked when would the City Executive Board consider the issue. In response Councillor Bob Price said that it depended on when a response was received back on the bid.

**(28) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Elise Benjamin**

Covered Market rent rises

There is case law that confirms that once final figures have been published following arbitration, they are the figures that have to be upheld. Would Councillor Price agree that the Council is risking further arbitration if it continues to demand rent rises that are above the final figures published following the recent Covered Market arbitration?

**Response:** The arbitration decision that was received in relation to five units rested on an arithmetical error in the award calculations. Regrettably, therefore, it cannot provide a sound basis for extension to the units where a new rent has yet to be settled. Property officers have written to all the lessees involved, proposing rents from 2012 based on the arbitration analysis. If they are not agreed, a further arbitration will be required. Names of possible arbitrators with a local connection have been proposed.

**(29) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Jim Campbell**

Bi-annual public meetings on major projects and initiatives

In the recommendations to his report on the Roger Dudman Way Flats Vincent Goodstadt proposed strengthening the relationship between the Universities and the Council and “engaging with the community on an ongoing basis and not just as and when projects arise”. In the light of this would the Council be willing to establish bi-annual public meetings where proposed major projects and initiatives, from the universities and/or the City Council, could be explained in outline to local residents who would have the opportunity to comment on them?

**Response:** I am happy to discuss this proposal with the appropriate officers of Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University.

**(30) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Jim Campbell**

Unitary status

In 2006 Oxford City Council submitted an unsuccessful bid to Central Government to be granted Unitary Status.

In the light of increasingly swingeing reductions to Local Government funding, and of continuing public confusion as to which authority is responsible for what, would the Council be willing to prepare a new bid for unitary status?

**Response:** The Coalition Government has made it clear that there will be no consideration of local government reorganisation during this quinquennium. When the new Labour Government takes office in May 2015, the radical devolution of powers and financial resources to city regions contained within the Adonis Report will be accompanied by some adjustments to local authority structures, and I would expect Oxford to be involved in that review process.

**(31) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Mark Mills**

Oxford transport solutions

In the light of County Councillor Ian Hudspeth's enthusiasm for an Oxfordshire monorail, would the administration be open to supporting other unconventional transport projects? For example, a cable car from East Oxford to Headington?

**Response:** As the Local Planning Authority, the City Council would undoubtedly be willing to consider planning applications for any innovative transport infrastructure that will help to ease congestion and air pollution in the city.

Councillor Mark Mills in a supplementary question asked if the Council was taking seriously the suggestion by County Councillor Ian Hudspeth. In response Councillor Bob Price said that the County Council was the transport authority. A wide range of issues was discussed on the City and County, and that he was supportive of innovative ways to resolve the traffic problems in Oxford.

**(32) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Graham Jones**

Educational attainment

Will he consider extending the council's successful programme for school leadership and educational attainment to strengthening school-home links?

**Response:** A number of imaginative and exciting proposals have already been generated by councillors, officers and teachers for the use of the educational attainment budget when the current programme winds down. Strengthening school/home links is one of these proposals building on the successes in this domain of the Childrens Centres. Decisions on the future application of that budget are likely to be taken as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

Councillor Graham Jones in a supplementary question asked if consideration would be given to unauthorised absence. In response Councillor Bob Price said that it was a complex area, but there were some clear ways to deal with it. He added that Anna Wright, used programmes used elsewhere on this issue that could be used in the next phase such as working with parents in the home.

## **113. PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT DO NOT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

### **Addresses**

- (1) Nigel Gibson – The Temple Cowley Pools Development – Energising the community - Text of the address appended to these minutes.
- (2) Chaka Artwell – Malfeasance in Public Office – Text of the address appended to these minutes.

## **114. PETITION - KEEP TEMPLE COWLEY POOLS OPEN**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which advised on the procedure that Council needed to follow under the Council's Petitions Scheme in respect of large petitions and provided information specifically on the petition concerning "Keep Temple Cowley Pools Open".

Nigel Gibson the head petitioner presented the petition and spoke on its contents.

Following Nigel Gibson's presentation, Council debated the contents of the petition.

Councillor Mike Rowley said that Council had been very helpful in agreeing to designate the site as a community asset and thanked the officers for their work in achieving this. He said that an impartial and constructive attitude had been taken on this and proposed that the petition be noted. Councillor Bob Price seconded Councillor Mike Rowley's proposal to note the petition.

Councillor Craig Simmons thanked the campaigners for their efforts and that the Green Group had always supported the campaign and proposed that the Council called upon the City Executive Board to work with the Save Temple Cowley Pools Group to enhance and preserve the facilities at Temple Cowley Pools.

Following a further debate, Council voted as follows:

- (a) To adopt the Motion by Councillor Mike Rowley to note the petition.
- (b) To not adopt the Motion by Councillor Craig Simmons to call upon the City Executive Board to work with the Save Temple Cowley Pools Group to enhance and preserve the facilities at Temple Cowley Pools.

## **115. OUTSIDE ORGANISATION/COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS AND QUESTIONS**

Oxfordshire Environment and Waste Partnership



Councillor John Tanner, Board Member, Cleaner Greener Oxford, submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which informed Council of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership and the Oxfordshire Environment Partnership.

Councillor John Tanner introduced the report.

Councillor Bob Price asked if there was a new recycling target and was there a target to reduce the amount of landfill waste. In response Councillor John Tanner said that the current targets would remain for recycling and waste reduction, with new targets being set possibly in October 2014. Regarding landfill waste he acknowledged that the amount would fall when the incinerator was operational.

Councillor Jean Fooks said that she sat on the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership in 2007 when recycling rates doubled. She congratulated Councillor John Tanner for keeping something going in the interim and hoped that some county wide funding would be forthcoming.

Councillor Craig Simmons asked if the contribution to the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership from the City council would still be spent on initiatives. In response Councillor John Tanner said that it would continue to be spent on recycling and waste reduction.

Council agreed to note the report.

## **116. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BRIEFING**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which updated Council on the activities of Scrutiny and other non-Executive Councillors since the previous meeting of Council.

Councillors Mark Mills moved the report.

Councillor Jim Campbell thanked Councillor Mark Mills for his work as Chair and Councillor Gill Sanders for her work and support as Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. He also thanked officers for their work and support.

Councillor Craig Simmons said that he had not supported the transition to a single Scrutiny Committee as this meant that things could not be considered due to lack of Committee and officer time.

Councillor Mike Rowley said that as a Board Member he had been impressed by the Scrutiny Committee on the occasions when he had attended the meeting.

Council agreed to note the report.

## **117. MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Council had before it nine Motions on Notice and reached decisions as follows:

- (1) Oxford Housing Crisis Summit – (Proposed by Councillor Sam Hollick, seconded by councillor Craig Simmons)**

## Green Group Member – Motion on Notice

Council notes that Oxford's housing is the most unaffordable in the UK, that there is a large shortage of affordable and council homes compared to the local housing list, rough sleeping is on the increase, and that people are being moved out of the city as housing benefit won't cover the cost of private rents.

Council recognises that Oxford has a housing crisis.

In light of this, Council resolves to hold a Housing Crisis Summit to explore innovative solutions to Oxford's housing crisis. This should involve a wide range of stakeholders including Council and private sector tenants, those on housing benefit and otherwise in housing need as well as third sector organisations, political representatives and housing providers from within the City and from surrounding areas.

### ***Councillor Scott Seamons seconded by Councillor Bob Price moved the following amendment:***

*Councillor Scott Seamons will propose an amendment to Motion 1 in the name of Councillor Sam Hollick as follows:*

*To delete all of the words in the third paragraph beginning with "In light of this....." and replace with the following words:*

*In light of severe housing needs of all tenures this council supports urban expansion of the city both to the North through the Northern Gateway and the Barton Park development; and to the South beyond the Grenoble Road. The recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment, made clear a need for 27,000 new homes in our city by 2031 and 100,000 in the wider county; such need cannot be met within the city's current boundaries alone, and will require a series of targeted reviews of the Oxford Green Belt. We remain disappointed about the loss of the Grenoble Road expansion with the abandonment of the South East Regional Plan with the ending of the Regional Development Agencies by this government.*

Following a debate Council resolved under Procedure Rule 11/19(d) to have a named vote. The result of the named vote was as follows:

For the amended Motion – Councillors Dee Sinclair, Tony Brett, Mohammed Niaz Abbasi, Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Laurence Baxter, Susan Brown, Anne Marie Canning, Mary Clarkson, Colin Cook, Van Coulter, Stephen Curran, Roy Darke, James Fry, John Goddard, Mick Haines, Rae Humberstone, Pat Kennedy, Shah Jahan-Khan, Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan, Mark Lygo, Helen O'Hara, Michele Paule, Susanna Pressel, Bob Price, Mike Rowley, Gill Sanders, Scott Seamons, Val Smith, John Tanner, Ed Turner, Oscar Van Nooijen, Ruth Wilkinson.

Against the amended Motion – Councillors Sam Hollick, David Williams, Dick Wolff.

Abstentions – Councillors Elise Benjamin, Jim Campbell, Jean Fooks, Graham Jones, Mark Mills, Gwynneth Royce, Craig Simmons.

With more Councillors voting for the amended Motion than against the amended Motion was adopted as follows:

Council notes that Oxford's housing is the most unaffordable in the UK, that there is a large shortage of affordable and council homes compared to the local housing list, rough sleeping is on the increase, and that people are being moved out of the city as housing benefit won't cover the cost of private rents.

Council recognises that Oxford has a housing crisis.

In light of severe housing needs of all tenures this council supports urban expansion of the city both to the North through the Northern Gateway and the Barton Park development; and to the South beyond the Grenoble Road. The recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment, made clear a need for 27,000 new homes in our city by 2031 and 100,000 in the wider county; such need cannot be met within the city's current boundaries alone, and will require a series of targeted reviews of the Oxford Green Belt. We remain disappointed about the loss of the Grenoble Road expansion with the abandonment of the South East Regional Plan with the ending of the Regional Development Agencies by this government.

**(2) Isolation and loneliness in our City – (Proposed by Councillor Anne-Marie Canning, seconded by Councillor Rae Humberstone)**

Labour Group Member – Motion on Notice

This Council notes that:

- Loneliness and isolation can have negative effects on our residents and communities here in Oxford.
- It is estimated one in ten people of pensionable age living in our City are likely to be classed as lonely or severely lonely.
- Loneliness and isolation can be a major threat to health and wellbeing. Being chronically lonely is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
- Almost 5 million older people say that the television is their main form of company (Harrop and Jopling, 2009).
- That social isolation can affect anyone but that the elderly and/or infirm can be more at risk.

This Council believes that:

- Councillors and the authority as a whole can play a key leadership role in ensuring Oxford is a City in which people maintain and forge social connections.

- All Councillors can assist in alleviating loneliness and isolation in their communities by having an awareness of the issue and by connecting people with relevant organisations.
- There are a number of organisations in Oxford, including the City Council, working to alleviate the suffering caused by social isolation from the long-running AgeUK Oxfordshire, Archway Foundation and the newly-started student-led project, Linkages.

This Council resolves:

- Become a supporter of the Campaign to End Loneliness, a network of national, regional and local organisations and people working together through community action, good practice, research and policy to create the right conditions to reduce loneliness in later life.
- Write to the Leader of the County Council to encourage him to undertake a self-assessment using the toolkit provided by the Campaign to End Loneliness and the Local Government Association to identify areas in which we can improve the experiences of socially isolated people in our City and in the wider county, and offering support in doing this.
- Encourage the County Council to involve those at risk of, or experiencing loneliness in drawing up an action plan to reduce loneliness and isolation and develop meaningful indicators to track progress, and offer support in doing this.

Following a debate, Council voted and the Motion was adopted.

**(3) Control of residential lettings boards in the City – (Proposed by Councillor Ruth Wilkinson, seconded by Councillor Jim Campbell)**

Liberal Democrat Group Member - Motion on Notice

Council acknowledges that “To Let” and “Let by” signs are erected on some properties for months despite the properties being occupied. This creates visual clutter, community objection and planning enforcement complaints, highlights student-targeted areas, and police advice in other parts of the country has pointed to a strong correlation between crime levels and the properties displaying “To Let” boards.

Council notes that other authorities have tackled this issue by means of either a voluntary code or a mandatory code, and that mandatory codes have been introduced in Leeds, and also in Newcastle following a review of a previously agreed voluntary code. Council further notes the well-documented success of a mandatory code on the erection of residential lettings boards in Inner NW Leeds which led to a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour, and improved the appearance of two predominantly student areas in the City.

Council also notes that the majority of agencies involved in letting residential properties do ensure that boards are taken down when reminded.

Council asks the City Executive Board:

- (a) To require officers to introduce a code on the erection of residential lettings boards in Oxford
- (b) To carry out a formal consultation process on whether this code should be voluntary or mandatory
- (c) To work with landlords, estate agencies which operate lettings, lettings agencies, boards agents, Oxford City Council officers and the Universities on the content of the code, taking into account the relevant regulations and ensuring that there is an agreed and clear definition of the start date of a tenancy which triggers the board erection process.

Councillor Ruth Wilkinson's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**(4) Children's Xmas Lantern Parade – Proposed by Councillor Craig Simmons, seconded by Councillor Sam Hollick**

Green Group Member – Motion on Notice

This Council notes the popularity of the Christmas Light Festival – the focal point of which was the Childrens Xmas Lantern Parade along with the fairground and market in St. Giles.

According to the Council's own data, last year 100,000 people attended with 84% of those surveyed rating the atmosphere as 'Good' or 'Excellent'

This Council therefore regrets the Council's decision to scale back the outdoor elements of the Festival, including cancelling the Lantern Parade and deciding not to close St. Giles, and asks the City Executive Board to reconsider this decision.

Councillor Craig Simmons Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**(5) Unmet housing need in Oxford – (Proposed by Councillor Bob Price, seconded by Councillor Scott Seamons)**

Labour Group Member – Motion on Notice

Council notes the very significant scale of unmet housing need in the city in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and regrets the serious social and economic problems that the pressure on the existing housing stock is creating. It also notes that the result of the South East Regional Plan inquiry in 2007 was a recommendation for a review of the Green Belt designation of the land to the south east of the city with a view to a significant urban extension in that area.

Council calls on the other District Councils and the County Council to take forward the findings of the Housing Market Assessment through the 'duty to cooperate' that is at the heart of the NPPF, and to identify sites that will provide sustainable housing growth on a sufficient scale that will meet the needs of the city and the county for the next two decades.

Councillor Bob Price's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**(6) A City of In – Oxford backing Britain's EU Membership – (Proposed by Councillor Mark Mills, seconded by Councillor Jim Campbell)**

Liberal Democrat Group Member - Motion on Notice

Council notes:

1. The widespread discussion of a referendum on Britain's continuing membership of the European Union.
2. That the Centre for Economics and Business Research estimates that around 1 in 9 jobs in the South East of England is reliant on trade with the European Union (1)
3. That the presence of the German based BMW's Plant Oxford is estimated to contribute more than £200 million to the local economy(2)
4. Statements by Ian Robertson, global head of sales at BMW that "the UK not only has to be part of Europe. It has to be a fundamentally active part of Europe."(3)
5. That according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency there are 3,355 EU students studying at Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford(4) They are estimated to contribute almost £40 million to the local economy.(5)
6. That in addition they employ many staff from the rest of the EU and that these staff play an important role in producing high quality research.
7. That £1.2m from the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe fund was used to kick-start OxFutures and the Low Carbon Hub.

Council believes:

1. That the European Union embodies values of peaceful international co-operation, the rule of law, transnational social solidarity, and a market economy which are important to the people of Oxford.
2. That the European Union has produced enormous benefits across the continent and that Oxford has shared in these benefits.

3. That the free movement of goods, services, capital and people throughout the Union is significantly to Oxford's economic advantage.
4. That the presence of citizens of other member states in Oxford represents a social and cultural gain for the city.
5. That as a result of the beliefs stated above it is in the interests of Oxford, the UK and Europe for Britain to remain in the European Union.
6. That is imperative that elected representatives from all parties speak out strongly and clearly against isolationist and protectionist voices.

Council resolves:

1. That it is the considered view of the Councillors of Oxford City Council that continued membership of the EU is in Britain's interest.
2. That the Chief Executive will write to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and Oxford's MP's explaining why it so important for Oxford that Britain stays in the EU, and exhorting them to be more forthright in explaining the benefits of Britain's membership.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cebr.com/reports/british-jobs-and-the-single-market/>

<sup>2</sup> Figure based estimate of BMW group's direct spending in the UK found at <http://tinyurl.com/pkn24zw> multiplied by Plant Oxford's share of BMW group's total employment in the UK

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/9813184/Ford-and-BMW-warn-against-UK-exit-from-EU-as-David-Cameron-readies-historic-speech.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/dataTables/studentsAndQualifiers/download/Institution1213.xlsx>

<sup>5</sup> Figures based on estimate of the average subsistence spending by a University of Birmingham student contained in: <http://tinyurl.com/pzj722j>

Councillor Mark Mill's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**(7) Flood Insurance and Mitigation – (Proposed by Councillor Craig Simmons, seconded by Councillor David Williams)**

Green Group Member – Motion on Notice

This Council notes that flooding incidents in Oxford are likely to increase as climate change worsens with serious effects on those whose homes and businesses are badly damaged and lives disrupted.

This Council also notes that the agreement between the UK Government and the insurance industry, the so-called 'Statement of Principles', which required members of the Association of British Insurers (ABI) to make

insurance available for properties in areas at significant flood risk, expired last year.

The outline of a new scheme, called 'Flood Re', has been agreed with the industry but this will not come into effect until at least 2015. Its terms, conditions and costs remain unclear.

In the interim, flood insurance is being provided on a voluntary basis with the risk that premiums and excesses will rise and new households where flooding is a risk will find getting a policy more and more difficult.

This Council therefore asks the relevant officer to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs expressing its concern on behalf of those at risk of flooding in the City and asks for details of any interim measures that will guarantee cover until the new arrangement are in place.

This Council also agrees to revisit its own policy on climate change adaptation working with other agencies to ensure that the City, its people and economy, are better prepared for more extreme weather events.

Councillor Craig Simmons Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**(8) Proliferation of Betting Shops – (Proposed by Councillor Michele Paule, seconded by Councillor Ed Turner)**

Labour Group Member – Motion on Notice

Council notes that:

- The Tory and LibDem coalition government's extension of permitted development rights has allowed for an increase in betting shops (Geofutures, 2012). For planning purposes betting shops are now placed in the same category (A2) as banks, building societies, estate agents and employment agencies. Furthermore, a change of use from a restaurant, cafe, pub or a takeaway to a betting shop is also allowed without planning permission.
- Betting shops have been shown to harm the diversity of local shopping zones and discourage other businesses. (Landman Economics report, 2013).
- The Campaign for Fairer Gambling has mapped the locations of betting shops nationally and finds that they are concentrated in the poorest areas. There are an estimated 24 betting shops in Oxford, the majority of which are to be found in the areas of most disadvantage. Compare this to the mere 7 in the Prime Minister's more affluent West Oxfordshire District.
- Local people are increasingly concerned about the establishment of new betting shops in their neighbourhoods

Council believes that:



- Betting shops make profit from the most vulnerable and add to existing social problems (Campaign for Fairer Gambling, 2013).
- The extension of permitted development rights is in contravention of the government's stated commitment to localism, and is proving harmful in other areas as well, such as the conversion of offices to housing.
- The concerns of local people should be attended to in granting permission to establish new betting shops

Council resolves:

- To make representations to the Secretary of State on the need for a new use class of planning permission for the establishment of betting shops giving councils the power to refuse them in any area where it is believed their presence will be detrimental to well-being.
- To work with local people in attempting to limit the opening of new betting shops where there are justified concerns.
- To monitor closely the impact of existing betting shops

Councillor Michele Paule's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**(9) Improving access to the Register of Gifts and Hospitality-(Proposed by Councillor David Williams, seconded by Councillor Elise Benjamin)**

Green Group Member – Motion on Notice

This Council believes that both Councillors and officers must act, and be seen to act, in an impartial and objective way if public faith in Council processes are to be maintained and enhanced.

There is already a requirement under the Employee Code of Conduct for each Service Area to maintain a Register of Gifts and Hospitality, but members of the public are unable to easily access this information.

Council therefore resolves that, in the interest of openness and transparency:

- (1) All Service Area Registers of Gifts and Hospitality should be made readily available to Councillors and members of the public via a link on the Council website; and
- (2) Reports on planning applications, and other quasi-judicial documents, should include reference to any related disclosures.

Councillor David Williams Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

**118. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.00 pm**

## Council Address: Harry Jenkins

Loneliness affects people of all ages, but is particularly prevalent among the elderly. Nationwide, around 10% of old people feel lonely often or always, with a much larger proportion feeling it sometimes. Over half of all people aged over 75 live alone and over half of all old people say the television is their main form of company. Loneliness not only afflicts people who live alone but also those who live in care and residential homes: from my own volunteering experiences, it's clear that being surrounded by people of your own age doesn't always provide residents of homes with the companionship they need.

Loneliness has a huge bearing on one's mental health, making people feel out of touch and trapped, fostering feelings of worthlessness and lowering people's self-esteem, in turn creating a vicious cycle that makes it harder for people to reengage with society. Lonely people are also at a greater risk of cognitive decline and developing dementia, decreasing their capacity to be self-sufficient and so increasing their vulnerability. More and more research is showing that loneliness is also extremely detrimental to one's physical health: the effect of loneliness on mortality exceeds the impact of well-known factors such as obesity and physical inactivity and is the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Without due attention, loneliness will continue to affect more and more people as our population ages. Local government must recognize that loneliness is a public health challenge that is both urgent and in need of action. Failure to do so will lead only to a greater number of vulnerable or ill old people in need of costly health and care services.

I'm a project coordinator of a student-led project called Linkages, which encourages and assists students to volunteer and engage with the elderly community in the Oxford city area, with support from the Oxford branch of the charity Student Hubs. Currently we are in the process of setting up a student befriending scheme, aimed at getting university students to visit old people who live alone, providing them with regular intergenerational contact as well as telephone and written correspondence outside of academic term times. Similar schemes are run on a county level by charities such as AgeUK and Oxfordshire Befriending for Life, and in Oxford itself by the Archway Foundation. In seeking advice on setting up our own scheme, a clear picture emerged from talking to people who ran such schemes: that they are oversubscribed and so can only do so much in helping to sustain a quality of life for elderly people in the Oxford area. Community projects can go a long way in helping those in need, but cannot independently solve the problem of loneliness.

The council can provide real leadership on this issue by creating a long-term strategy to combat loneliness: it has the means to identify who is worst affected and for what reasons; it can ensure general services are geared up to meet the needs of those who are lonely; and by working closely with and supporting a range of already existing community resources, such as neighbourhood-level schemes like ours, it can quickly and cost effectively begin to raise awareness and provide more support to those who need it.

By tackling loneliness, the council can both diminish the vulnerability of the elderly in Oxford city as well as improving their general quality of life.

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The sale of the Temple Cowley Pools site offers a fantastic opportunity for the Council to work with the community to make better use of publicly owned land through an exciting and innovative development, providing an immediate and continuing financial return, and delivering a long-lasting legacy to the community of East Oxford that will energise an area that has seen a gradual decline in services and facilities over the last twenty years.

Since it is now public knowledge that the SaveTCP consortium is bidding for the Temple Cowley site, I thought Council would be interested in learning more about our plans.

The SaveTCP consortium comprises a broad spectrum of the community, from professional architects and engineers through to committed users of the current Temple Cowley Pools & Fitness Centre, as well as local artists, and will work closely with Oxford City Council to ensure a successful and viable development of the site.

The huge groundswell of opinion to retain health and fitness facilities at Temple Cowley is well-known through the activities of the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign, who delivered the largest ever petition in the history of Oxford to the City Council in 2010, and since then have demonstrated continuing massive popular support from across Oxford through a series of petitions, the seventh of which is being debated later this evening.

Oxford City Council is committed to “building a world class city for everyone”, and this special self-funding project returns much more than simply cash – by selecting our community development you will actively help develop much-needed facilities in a centre of areas of deprivation, support improving the health and well-being of target demographics such as young people, support maintaining the independence of groups such as the disabled, elderly and infirm, as well as achieving an initial and continuing financial return in the face of savage budget cuts from central government.

We will transform the current site, delivering:

- An empathetic development of approximately 30 housing units, over 50% of which will be for affordable housing, but including a number of luxury apartments with ‘dreaming spires’ views across the centre of Oxford
- A unique ‘castle in the air’ community space offering year-round activities for all members of local Cowley community, and available to all across East Oxford and beyond
- A café adjacent to the gym and a catering area in the community space
- Remodelling of health and fitness facilities on the ground floor, comprising:
  - 25m competition swimming pool
  - Diving pool

- Dance and Exercise studio
- Sauna and steam room
- Gym

The low-carbon housing will encourage increased public transport use yet maintain car parking for access to the health and fitness facilities and retain the required access for the adjacent library. Simply through re-using the existing building we are reducing 'capital' carbon emissions from demolition and rebuilding, as well as lowering remediation costs. The low-carbon theme continues into the health and fitness centre, building on its record of the most energy-efficient amongst council leisure centres through features such as green roof, green walls, rainwater harvesting, seasonal heat exchange, low-cost CHP, PV provision and the opportunity to be part of a local energy-generation network.

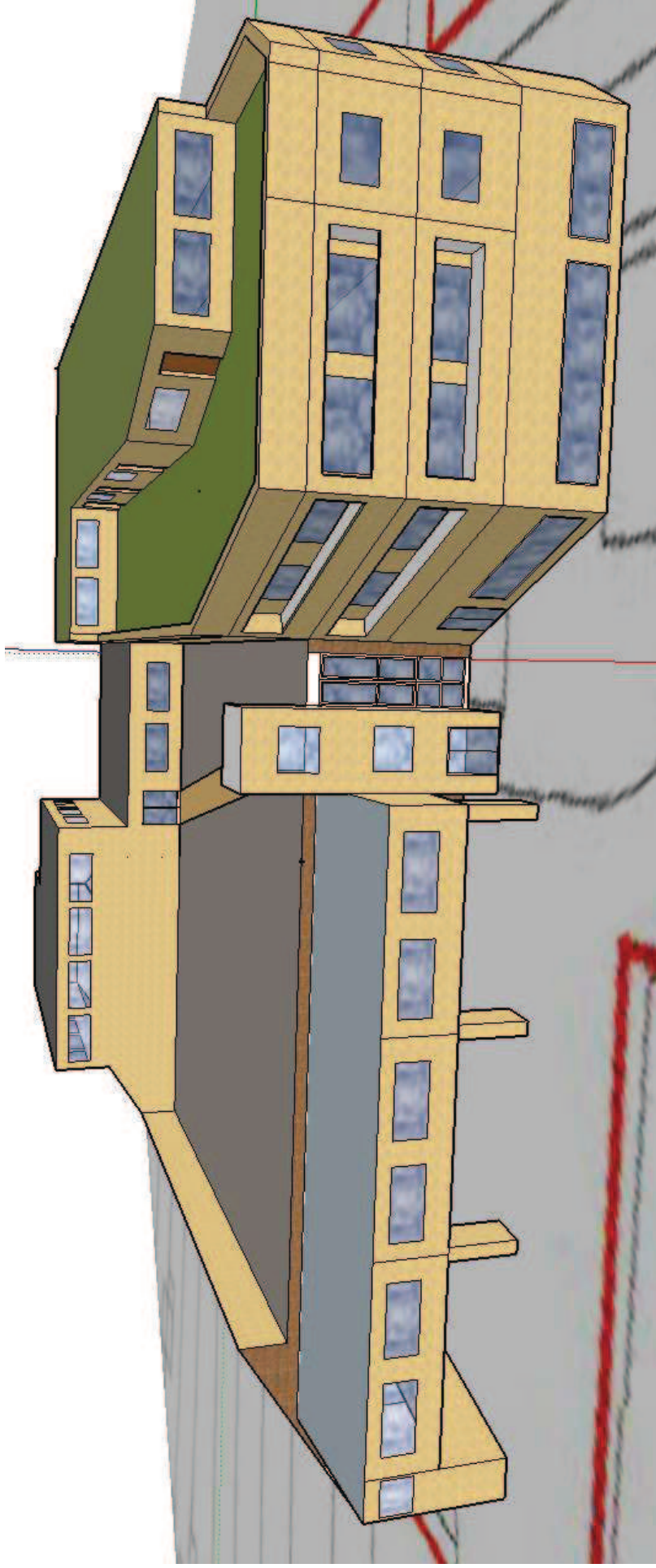
The existing centre will provide a focus for the redevelopment; the huge increase in population of the Temple Cowley and Cowley Marsh areas over the last decade is set to continue over the next twenty years, and this growth demands both a community centre and health, fitness and leisure facilities that are easily accessible. Designated by the City Council as both a primary district centre and a transport hub, this site's location is ideal to fulfil the growing and continuing need for these services.

These exciting facilities complement what is already on offer in the local area and assist in mitigating the loss of others; the adjacent library and public records office, and the retail centres at Templars Square and the John Allen centre combine with the new development to provide a comprehensive leisure opportunity, while the new community space will help replace facilities lost through the redevelopment of the Barns Road community centre.

A key factor in the project is community inclusion at all stages – listening and responding to the public is vital to ensure facilities match what people want and need. And by inviting local artists to the consortium we offer the opportunity to continue the link with the existing and much-loved murals and design inside the current building.

This unique development is an exciting and innovative project that delivers for the community in a way that is both inclusive and financially viable. We look forward to working with Oxford City Council to realise the aspirations and needs of the people of East Oxford, and hope that councillors will support both this project and their voters in debating the petition from the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign this evening.





*The images show initial design considerations; the core health & fitness centre building remodelled and extended to incorporate on right-hand side reception/gym/cafe (ground floor), housing on 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> floors with 3<sup>rd</sup> floor combining housing and garden roof space. Elevated housing at front to retain car parking, and lift/staircase leading across to community space over existing diving pool area.*



## Address to Council – Chaka Artwell

Malfeasance in Public Office is used now by the Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Secretary to correct injustices perpetrated by people who hold Public Office: The Police Constable who falsely reported hearing the Cabinet Minister the Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP use the phrase "plebs", is now in prison. The Police Constable was tried using the Misconduct in Public Office.

Similarly, Senior South Yorkshire Police Constables are being held to account for over seeing the deliberate altering of thousands of witness Statements in order to put the responsibility for the Football Supporter's deaths, away from the South Yorkshire Police Force, who were responsible for crowd control on the tragic day. Finally, to the Home Secretary credit, so much Malfeasance was committed by the Metropolitan Police Force in order to hide the scale of blatant racism among senior Constables who were determined to protect the five young men who murder Mr Stephen Lawrence, that a Public Inquiry has been recently instituted by the Home Secretary.

Oxford City Council's well rewarded Officers and Bob Prices Labour Party need to be reminded that they are subject to the Common Law Act of Malfeasance in Public Office; one of the clauses speaks of "an abuse of the public's trust in the office holder." Bob Price's Labour Party has caused much distrust especially for people in East Oxford with his determination to ignore the over whelming Will of the people of Oxford to keep the unique Temple Cowley Pool and Gynasium. Bob Price's Labour Party has abused the Public trust in the Council by Mr Price's determination to ignored the biggest Petition ever received by Oxford City Council on a single issue with the help and assistance of the well rewarded Officers of the Council. Oxford people are aware that Bob Price's Labour Party has deliberately under resourced Temple Cowley Pools in order to create an excuse to close the pool. In a similar exercise, Bob Price's Labour Party is ignoring the needs of the small traders in the Covered Market, and he seems determined to destroy the trade in the Covered Market traders.

I am calling on you, the Elected people, to support to the overwhelming Will of the people of Oxford to retain the Temple Cowley Pools. The decision to close Temple Cowley Pool has abused the Public trust in the Office of this Council which we believe is contrary to Public Law.

Councillors please stop Bob Price's Labour Party from abusing the Public Office which he holds. Councillors, if you cannot stop Mr Bob Price's plan to destroy the Temple Cowley Pool complex, then Councillors, please support wholehearted the Community Bid to purchase Temple Cowley Pool and retain it has a Swimming Pool and Community Centre for the people of Cowley; bearing in mind that the people of Cowley have had their Community Centre destroyed.

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