

# MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

Monday 25 July 2016

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**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Altaf-Khan (Lord Mayor), Humberstone (Deputy Lord Mayor), Brown (Sheriff), Cook, Abbasi, Anwar, Azad, Brandt, Chapman, Clarkson, Coulter, Curran, Fooks, Fry, Gant, Goff, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Landell Mills, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Pegg, Pressel, Rowley, Sanders, Simm, Simmons, Sinclair, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Tidball, Wade, Wilkinson and Wolff.

## 12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Goddard, Iley-Williamson, Price, Turner, Paule, Smith and Upton.

## 13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minute number 20

Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan and Malik declared that this item affected one of their disclosable pecuniary interests and left the chamber for the duration of this item.

## 14. MINUTES

Council approved the minutes of the meetings held on 18 April 2016 and 16 May 2016 as correct records.

## 15. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

There were no appointments.

## 16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor announced:

- the Abingdon vs Oxford Bowls match would take place on 7 August and volunteers were needed of the team;
- the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in June had been very successful and he had received a letter of thanks for the Council's work from the Deputy Lord Lieutenant
- the Cowley Road Carnival was very successful and he congratulated the Cowley Works volunteers and the council's events team for their work.

The Sheriff announced a successful inspection of Port Meadow and a less successful Aunt Sally match afterwards.

Councillor Tanner, on behalf of the Leader, announced:

- the percentage of waste recycled had increased on the previous year and the total amount of waste had reduced;
- six parks now had Green Flag awards;
- discussions on devolution were ongoing;
- his thanks to the bus company for an improved bus service to Rose Hill and Littlemore from 25 July.

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

A member of the public, Judith Harley, asked a question in relation to Minute 18 submitted in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

The text of her question and the written response are in the supplement to the minutes.

## **18. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2015/16**

Council considered a report to the City Executive Board on 16 June 2016 which provided an update on Finance, Risk and Performance as at the end of the financial year and included recommendations on budgetary provision

**Council resolved to** establish budgetary provision in respect of the new bids show in paragraphs 7 and Appendix 4 of the officers' report.

## **19. OXFORD CITY COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2015-2016**

Council considered a report to the City Executive Board on 16 June 2016 which detailed the progress made on the Council's Safeguarding Action Plan and recommended the Action Plan for approval for 2016-2017.

This was before Council for information only in accordance with the action in the Oxford City Council Section 11 Self- Assessment Action Plan 2015-16 Learning Point 1 (contained in the report to Council on 20 July 2015).

After members listened to and asked questions of the Board Member, **Council noted** the report and the accompanying documents.

## **20. POLICY ON HACKNEY CARRIAGE QUANTITY CONTROL – UNMET DEMAND SURVEY**

Councillors Abbassi, Altaf-Khan and Malik declared that this item affected one of their disclosable pecuniary interests and left the chamber for the duration of this item.

Council considered a report to the General Purposes Licensing Committee on 18 May 2016 which details the findings of the “Unmet Demand” survey that was carried out between 7 September 2015 and 20 December 2015.

Council noted comments from members:

- the unmet need survey could be brought forward if required
- feedback from the hospitals and observations from outlying areas such as Headington should be included in this.

### **Council resolved:**

1. To note that there is currently no unmet demand for the services of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and
2. **therefore** to maintain the Council’s Policy of Hackney Carriage Quantity Control and the current quota of 107 Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences; and
3. **that** a further “Unmet Demand” survey be commissioned in 2018, subject to any future changes to relevant legislation.

## **21. CONSTITUTION REVIEW 2016**

Council considered a report and appendices recommending changes to the Council’s constitution. Members suggested a review of the reduction in allowances for non-attendance at training.

The Head of Law and Governance proposed an amendment as set out in the resolution.

A further amendment as set out in the resolution was proposed, seconded, and agreed on being put to the vote.

### **Council resolved to approve, with immediate effect:**

1. the amendments to the Constitution outlined in the report
2. and the amendments in:
  - Appendix 1 – Full Council Procedures;
  - Appendix 2 – Board Procedures; with amendments:
    - a) correcting the order of **12.7 Order of business** to show reports from scrutiny committees to be taken **before** items for decision

b) addresses and questions by members of the public, **15 minutes in total**.

- Appendix 3 - Code of Practice for dealing with planning applications at Area Committees and Planning Review Committees;
- Appendix 4 – Code on Councillor-Officer Relations;
- Appendix 5 - Miscellaneous proposed changes.

## **22. AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUCCESSFUL LEGAL CHALLENGE TO THE PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Council considered a report to explain the impact of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's successful appeal concerning his national affordable housing policy.

Council **noted** the consequences of the decision of the Court of Appeal and national planning policy applicable to affordable housing contributions.

## **23. CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES**

Council had before it the minutes of the City Executive Board meeting of 14 April, 19 May, and 16 June 2016

On Minute 18 – disabled transport contingency fund, the Board Member noted Councillor Fook's question as to whether some of this could be used to fund an enhanced bus service in Cutteslowe/ north Oxford to mitigate the effects of Oxfordshire County Council's cuts to subsidies for bus services.

## **24. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

Members of Council submitted 27 written questions to members of the City Executive Board. The questions, written answers, and summaries of supplementary questions and answers are in the supplement to the minutes.

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

Council heard addresses and questions to Executive Board Members from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Council resolved to suspend the relevant standing orders to hear an address from Mr Ramzy, a representative of the local Muslim community, on the first

motion. He spoke about the increase in hate crime since the EU referendum result, gave examples of the damaging effect physical and verbal abuse had on its victims. Muslims were well integrated and peaceful. It was important to help the police and reduce this frightening crime.

Addresses were heard from:

1. Chaka Artwell - summer activities for young people.
2. Chaka Artwell - Barton community facilities.
3. Sharyn Hyde, PSPnO campaign group.
4. Nigel Gibson - Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign.
5. Chaka Artwell - city centre PSPO.

Board members responded to these as summarised in the supplement.

Questions were heard from:

1. Cressida Jervis Read – public events.
2. Hazel Dawe – air quality
3. Steve Dawe – private landlords.
4. Mr Chaka Artwell – letters to the Council.
5. Judith Harley – FOI 5462 – Request For Catalyst Temple Cowley.

Four questions were submitted in writing but the questioner did not attend to speak:

1. Ann Duncan– parishing the city.
2. Elise Benjamin– Carnival.
3. Matthew Ledbury – local government funding.
4. Sietske Boeles, CPRE Oxfordshire – Green Belt development.

Board members responded to these as summarised in the supplement.

Questions were submitted from but the speakers did not attend. The written question and responses are included in the supplement.

The supplement to these minutes contains the full text of addresses and questions where these were delivered as submitted and summaries of speeches which were significantly different. Written responses and summaries of verbal responses from the Board Members are included.

## **26. OUTSIDE ORGANISATION/COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS AND QUESTIONS - COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REPORT**

Council had before it a report of the Board Member for Community Safety.

**Council noted the report without comment.**

## **27. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT JULY 2016**

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair.

The Chair outlined the proposed review topics for 2016/17 of devolution and safeguarding in language schools.

He thanked Councillor Simmons for his time as Chair and thanked Board members for the time they give to scrutiny and their response to the report of the equality and diversity review group.

He thanked Geno Humphrey for his work on the Housing Panel and the scrutiny officer, Andrew Brown, for his work for the committee.

## **28. MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Council had before it seven motions on notice submitted in accordance with the Council procedure rules and reached decisions on three motions as set out below.

### **Motions not taken**

Four motions were not taken because the time allowed in the Council's procedure rules had elapsed:

1. Banning Glyphosate in Oxford
2. Scrapping of student grants and curbing of access to higher education for disadvantaged young people
3. Democratic mandate for national leader
4. The future electoral system in Oxfordshire.

### **(a) Following the referendum this Council condemns the rise in hate crimes**

Councillor Tanner, seconded by Councillor Gant and supported by Councillor Simmons, proposed the submitted cross-party motion (Following the Referendum this Council condemns the rise in hate crimes).

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

**Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:**

***Oxford City Council profoundly regrets the outcome of the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, and the way in which the tenor of the Leave campaign has stimulated a wave of hostility towards migrants and ethnic minorities. We are proud that Oxford voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU, reflecting the open, diverse and tolerant character of our city, and we are committed to retaining our strong international links and to work with our city and county partners to reduce the negative economic and social consequences of leaving the EU.***

***We are particularly concerned by the reported rise in racism, xenophobia and hate crimes since the referendum, and wish to place on record our condemnation of such crimes.***

***The Council will work with local partners to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia and wish to reassure everyone living in our city that they are valued members of our community.***

***As part of the renegotiation process with the EU, the Council will make the strongest representations to protect the existing status and rights of EU citizens currently living or working in the city and the county.***

**(b) Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)**

Councillor Tanner, seconded by Councillor Curran, proposed his submitted motion (Local Transport Plan 4)

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

**Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:**

***Oxford City Council welcomes the improvements made by Oxfordshire County Council to Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), including the greater emphasis on walking and cycling, clean air, support for a workplace parking levy in Oxford and the option of more residents' parking schemes across the city.***

***However LTP4 is still not ambitious enough and offers too little too late. We consider that a unitary Oxford would be able to make the improvements needed more quickly and effectively. We also consider that the standard of road and pavement maintenance in Oxford is unacceptably poor.***

***The City Council calls on the County Council as highway authority, to improve cycling and pedestrian facilities, introduce a zero emission zone and to consult on a workplace parking levy for Oxford without delay.***

***The City Council also asks the County to review its spending priorities, and the areas of Oxfordshire where transport funding is spent, so that more money is available for road repairs and maintenance in the city.***

**(c) Planning sustainability and the Green Belt**

Councillor Goff, seconded by Councillor Fooks, proposed her submitted motion (Planning sustainability and the Green Belt)

Councillor Brandt proposed and Councillor Simmons seconded an amendment:

*Add to the beginning of the motion:*

*Recognising that, with the exception of land to the west of the City, most Green Belt falls within the boundaries of our neighbouring authorities so Oxford City Council currently has very limited influence on how the land is developed.*

*Add the following bullet point:*

- Council will only support developments which align with the Council's social housing policies*

On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared carried.

Councillor Hollingsworth proposed and Councillor Pegg seconded an amendment:

*Redraft text of the submitted motion as follows:*

*Council notes that while the Oxford Green Belt was instituted in the late 1950s it remained interim for several decades, and its boundaries have been adjusted continually throughout its existence. The Council further notes that the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 84) specifically allows for the review and alteration of green belt boundaries. The Council further notes that neighbouring local authorities Cherwell, Vale of White of Horse and South Oxfordshire have all proposed or agreed modifications to the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt as part of their most recent Local Plans. Council recognises the current crisis in availability of housing, but also recognises that the purposes for which the Green Belt was invented have not gone away. Council accepts that people living near areas of Green Belt have legitimate concerns at any suggestion of part of it being lost, and that these concerns need to be carefully balanced against the duty of the City Council to plan for a successful city with sufficient homes, employment, facilities and recreation space for current and future residents of Oxford.*

*Council will in the development of the Local Plan and other planning policy give due consideration to the following:*

*-Oxford's Green Belt remains protected by existing local and national policies that prevent inappropriate development in all but exceptional circumstances*

*-proper weight will be given to the agreed methodology and framework for reviewing Green Belt boundaries that form part of the comprehensive review of the Oxford Green Belt already carried out by LUC on behalf of all the relevant Local Planning Authorities, and used by neighbouring District Council's in their recent Local Plan reviews and updates*

*-studies will be commissioned to properly assess the full value of the biodiversity and the ecosystem of open spaces both within and outside the Green Belt as part of the analysis of the overall value of the Green Belt and specific sites within it-any building within the Green Belt will not only replace but actively enhance the biodiversity and natural capital provided by the area lost, by use of scientific techniques such as ecological risk assessment and biodiversity management plans working closely with relevant environmental NGOs, or as*

*otherwise set out in existing NPPF or local policies governing development in the Green Belt.*

*-as applicant Council will support buildings which meet the eco-village and low-carbon approach supported by Council at its meeting of 18 April 2016 as an "...example [to] persuade / push / cajole private developers in Oxford to make their contribution to saving planet earth"*

*-Council will support projects which guarantee sustainable infrastructure such as bike lanes to and from the development as well as on it, will encourage scientifically-based and forward-looking approaches to sustainable transport such as smart traffic lights*

On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared carried.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amended motion was declared carried.

**Council resolved to adopt the motion as set out below:**

***Recognising that, with the exception of land to the west of the City, most Green Belt falls within the boundaries of our neighbouring authorities so Oxford City Council currently has very limited influence on how the land is developed,***

***Council notes that while the Oxford Green Belt was instituted in the late 1950s it remained interim for several decades, and its boundaries have been adjusted continually throughout its existence. The Council further notes that the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 84) specifically allows for the review and alteration of green belt boundaries. The Council further notes that neighbouring local authorities Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire have all proposed or agreed modifications to the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt as part of their most recent Local Plans. Council recognises the current crisis in availability of housing, but also recognises that the purposes for which the Green Belt was invented have not gone away. Council accepts that people living near areas of Green Belt have legitimate concerns at any suggestion of part of it being lost, and that these concerns need to be carefully balanced against the duty of the City Council to plan for a successful city with sufficient homes, employment, facilities and recreation space for current and future residents of Oxford.***

***Council will in the development of the Local Plan and other planning policy give due consideration to the following:***

***-Oxford's Green Belt remains protected by existing local and national policies that prevent inappropriate development in all but exceptional circumstances***

***-proper weight will be given to the agreed methodology and framework for reviewing Green Belt boundaries that form part of the comprehensive review of the Oxford Green Belt already carried out by LUC on behalf of all the relevant Local Planning Authorities, and used by neighbouring District Council's in their recent Local Plan reviews and updates***

***-studies will be commissioned to properly assess the full value of the biodiversity and the ecosystem of open spaces both within and outside the Green Belt as part of the analysis of the overall value of the Green Belt and specific sites within it-any building within the Green Belt will not only replace but actively enhance the biodiversity and natural capital provided by the area lost, by use of scientific techniques such as ecological risk assessment and biodiversity management plans working closely with relevant environmental NGOs, or as otherwise set out in existing NPPF or local policies governing development in the Green Belt.***

***-as applicant Council will support buildings which meet the eco-village and low-carbon approach supported by Council at its meeting of 18 April 2016 as an "...example [to] persuade / push / cajole private developers in Oxford to make their contribution to saving planet earth"***

***-Council will support projects which guarantee sustainable infrastructure such as bike lanes to and from the development as well as on it, will encourage scientifically-based and forward-looking approaches to sustainable transport such as smart traffic lights***

***-Council will only support developments which align with the Council's social housing policies***

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.10 pm**

**To: Council**

**Date: 25 July 2016**

**Title of Report: Part 1 Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses**

## Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

## Question to be taken in Part 1 of the agenda

### 1. Question from Judith Harley - Agenda Item 7 – Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground Car Park Extension

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

Item 7 on tonight's agenda, Integrated Performance Report, contains the following:

"The City Executive Board recommends that Council establish budgetary provision in respect of the new bids show in paragraphs 7 and Appendix 4 of the officers' report"

On page 6 of Appendix 4, Carry Forward and New Bids, from Agenda Item 7, the Integrated Performance Report Q4 2015/16, is the following item:

Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground car park extension

New Scheme Request - £132,000

Reason for Request – it is proposed that the adjacent Marsh Recreation Car Park be extended and refurbished to provide extra car parking space while some of the existing Depot staff parking is designated for fleet vehicle use.

When this item was presented to the CEB on 16th June I asked a series of written questions about this request, including:

- Where, exactly, is it envisaged that the Car Park will be extended? Into Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground? Or on its present footprint in an upwards or downwards direction?

and

- The Marsh Recreation Car Park is supposed to be a public car park, for the general public, not a private car park for Depot staff, which is what it actually seems to be. Last summer, planning application 15/01661/CT3 was submitted by the City Council for “Part change of use of recreation ground for external storage of stacked wheeled bins, creation of porous hardstanding, with ancillary fencing and landscaping to increase storage capacity for the Council Depot, for a temporary period of up to 5 years (Amended site plan) | Oxford City Council Depot Marsh Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX4 2HH”. Thanks to a concerted campaign by local residents objecting to this application because of its proposed encroachment into the Park, this application was eventually withdrawn. In the light of this, my third question is – why is this proposal, which presumably will also try to take part of the recreation ground, being made at all? This is effectively trying to achieve the same effect as withdrawn application 15/01661/CT3 by stealth. Any attempts to encroach onto any part of the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground will be met with strong opposition from local residents

The CEB’s reply to these questions envisaged extending the current car park towards the pavilion, “ to enlarge the public car park for recreation users and Direct Services employees and reduce parking problems in the neighbourhood”.

I thought that the City Council’s policy was to encourage use of public transport rather than use of private cars, as seen in their attitude to housing developments with minimal parking, and travel to leisure facilities such as Blackbird Leys Pool. Why not encourage employees of Direct Services to use public transport, and leave Cowley Marsh Car Park (and on-street parking in the neighbouring streets) available for users of Cowley Marsh Park, without the need to expand the parking facilities? How, exactly, will the Council encourage such behaviour?

### **Written Response from Councillor Turner**

The Council absolutely supports and encourages its staff to use public transport, cycling etc. To this extent, the number of staff cycle racks has doubled in the last 2 years at the Cowley Marsh Depot.

Public transport is used by many staff, but shifts commence from 5.30am and bus services are not plentiful at this time of the day, particularly where route transfers are required for those who do not live within a short distance of the depot.

It has not yet been decided whether to proceed with the proposed extension, the rationale for which would be to alleviate the impact of necessary staff parking upon local residents. Local residents will be kept informed as the matter is considered.

**To:** Council  
**Date:** 25 July 2016  
**Title of Report:** Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Board Members and Leader, republished after the meeting to include supplementary questions and responses.

## Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Board members, Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they were taken at the meeting.
2. Responses are included.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the councillor answering the original question.
4. This report is republished as part of the minutes pack after the Council meeting and includes supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting.
5. Unfamiliar terms not explained in the text are briefly explained in footnotes.

## Questions and responses

### Board member for a Clean and Green Oxford

#### 1. From Councillor Pressel to Councillor Tanner

The new junction at George St/Hythe Bridge St, as well as being dangerous for cyclists and unfriendly to pedestrians, is causing very lengthy tailbacks at many times of the day in Beaumont St and Walton St. The County Council is dragging its heels quite frustratingly on finding a solution for this problem (unitary status can't come too soon).

Since many people live on Walton St, please can we consider monitoring the air quality in this street, so that we can gauge the effect of the standing traffic on residents' health?

#### Written Response

We currently monitor air quality in close proximity to Walton Street; on Worcester Street, George Street, Hythe Bridge Street, Beaumont Street and the corner of Worcester Street and Park End Street. The results of the monitoring from the last five years are shown below. As can be seen below, measurements show a mix of increases and decreases in the annual mean. It is not possible to directly associate this with the changes to the junction, as air quality is impacted by conditions such as wind and

temperature. It is however not possible either to rule out that junction changes are having an impact on air quality.

Overall ten year trends from our data collection and analysis show that nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels have dropped by typically 35% at roadsides in the city centre.

Site Name	Monitoring Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) <sup>(1)</sup>	Valid Data Capture 2015 (%) <sup>(2)</sup>	NO <sub>2</sub> Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) <sup>(3)</sup>				
				2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Hythe Bridge Street	Diffusion Tube	92	92	60	53	43	42	36
Worcester Street	Diffusion Tube	83	83	66	64	54	52	50
Beaumont Street	Diffusion Tube	92	92	57	49	42	43	44
George Street	Diffusion Tube	83	83	80	66	58	54	61
Park End Street	Diffusion Tube	100	100	58	55	55	42	48

In 2015 we increased the number of diffusion tube monitoring locations in the city by nearly 50% and this increased level of monitoring will continue in 2016/17.

Monitoring locations are chosen on an annual basis. We are currently exposing 75 diffusion tubes for twelve months of the year. Approximately half of this number are deployed within central Oxford at locations where we believe relevant exposure is most likely to be significant. The remainder are used outside of the central area, again being prioritised by locations where relevant exposure is most likely.

Practically speaking we cannot monitor at every location on a continuous basis. To make most efficient use of our resources we rotate a number of monitoring sites every year, ensuring such sites are covered on average every 2 to 3 years. As pollution levels are generally falling, the numbers of hot-spot locations are also falling, enabling us to return to these sites on a more frequent basis.

Walton Street will be considered for specific air quality monitoring when we draw up the schedule for 2017.

The attached briefing note sets out how we decide where to monitor.

## 2. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Tanner

Will the councillor join me in regretting the symbolism inherent in the abolition of the Department of Energy and Climate Change, and in hoping that this does not prove part of the ongoing narrative of Conservative governments continually and successively downgrading the commitment to green issues (scrapping subsidies for wind farms, cancelling the Green Deal), and generally unpicking the hard-earned achievements of Ed Davey in the coalition?

Will he reaffirm Oxford's commitment to the aims of the Paris climate change agreement, whether or not it remains legally binding on the UK?

### Written Response

Yes

## Board member for Community Safety

### 3. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Sinclair

In order to help monitor the effective progress of the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), will the board member inform council how many occasions the city centre order has led to enforcement action under the following circumstances:

- North of St Giles Church
- inside University Parks
- inside any other property owned and managed by the University of Oxford
- inside the grounds of a college of the university

#### **Written Response**

The purpose of the PSPO has always been to set out minimum standards of behaviour when entering an area with the aim to challenge inappropriate behaviour and change culture over time. With the emphasis being on information and advice we have always expected a high degree of compliance. This is mostly achieved by use of the advice sheets that we have around begging, busking and peddling. Over 200 advice sheets have been given out to people since the introduction of the PSPO in Feb 2016, and one fixed penalty issued. The vast majority of these are issued in Cornmarket Street and surrounding streets.

The arrangement agreed with the University and colleges is that incidents are referred to the University security service to deal with first, some of which have been relevant to the PSPO. If the University or Colleges wish for additional support under the PSPO they will contact the council. Officers regularly meet with the University security service to discuss incidents affecting their land and buildings. This information exchange keeps the environment clean and safe and is a successful example of multi-agency working.

I believe that the situation in the city centre has improved since the PSPO was introduced and that there is much less tension in the area around the competing needs and views of the various stakeholders and individuals.

#### **Supplementary question**

Please can we see the agreement with the University, and is the scope of the PSPO too wide?

#### **Response**

I will check if one is available and give a written response. University land was included because of the potential for the displacement of problem behaviour onto their land.

### 4. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Sinclair

Phase 1 of the City's consultation on the proposed Waterways Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is now underway.

However there is no protection built in to the projected PSPO for everyday boating activities, whereas similar alleged breaches by land-based residents (e.g. production of smoke, noise or fumes) can only be prosecuted if Environmental Health levels are exceeded. The proposed test in the draft PSPO of 'reasonable grounds for annoyance'

is subjective and would be difficult to prove to the high standard required by a Court if a prosecution were to be attempted.

Can Councillor Sinclair confirm that the same rules will be applied to boating residents as to land-based residents of this City?

### **Written Response**

First of all I should point out that the draft PSPO which forms the basis of preliminary engagement applies to everyone in the areas defined as the Waterways. Some of the issues could clearly relate to users of the waterways areas other than boaters. It is therefore unhelpful to characterise this as an exercise of targeting boaters and their way of life. In phase 1 we have had some constructive meetings with representatives of the boaters and I have reassured them of this point. We are starting to discuss with them alternative methods of dealing with some of the acute problems that the draft PSPO is aimed at. I want to give sufficient time for these discussions to come to fruition and have asked officers to engage positively with this and to report back to me. In order that sufficient time is given to progress this work I am proposing that we review the position in six months' time.

In terms of prosecution – it is the Council's Enforcement Policy and the Home Office Guidance which set out where and when it is appropriate to use prosecution powers. You will have seen in my answer regarding the city centre PSPO that enforcement action is the exception rather than the rule.

### **Supplementary question**

Can we stop work on this Order and can environmental health officers prepare a report after surveying the waterways to accurately assess nuisance?

### **Response**

We are looking at alternative ways of resolving the problems but it is not just the boating community who will be affected by the introduction of a PSPO.

## **Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services**

### **5. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Brown**

The City Council resolved in 2009 that all employees, contractors, temporary staff and agency workers should be paid the Oxford Living Wage. Can you assure Council that all contractors working for the City Council are being paid the Oxford living wage?

### **Written Response**

The council first started down the path of becoming a Living Wage employer after a motion to council in 2007 from my successor (and predecessor) as a ward councillor for Churchill, Dr Joe McManners.

In 2009, following a Council Motion the City Executive Board approved proposals for an Oxford Living Wage.

At the City Executive Board in December 2011 the Council resolved to encourage contractors to adopt a similar position, and also wrote to local employers to encourage them in the same vein.

The Council's standard business terms and conditions encourage a contractor to '*make all reasonable endeavours to ensure that it complies with all such "living wage" requirements as specified by the Council from time to time .....in relation to all of its employees or representatives so engaged*'

Contractors are therefore strongly encouraged to pay the Oxford Living Wage.

### **Supplementary question**

Are there any checks on our contractors' compliance on paying the Oxford Living Wage?

### **Response**

I will provide a written answer.

## **6. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Brown**

City Council staff are working very hard to meet targets and improve performance. Is the Council ensuring that staff are not put under excessive stress, which can lead to an increase in sickness absence, particularly among those in Direct Services? Can Council be given the figures over the last three years, by service area, please?

### **Written Response**

Oxford City Council believes that a healthy and productive workforce best serves the Council and the City's residents. High attendance rates have a positive impact on the quality of the services we provide to the public, on work colleagues and facilitate value for money for council tax payers. We aim to promote a culture of attendance through fair, consistent and effective management of sickness absence. Since 2008/09 we have reduced the average days' sickness per employee as an organisation from 12.56 days to 6.81 days at the end of March 2016.

All managers are trained in accordance with the Council's attendance management policy. They will hold return to work interviews and follow up meetings with staff after absences as required, know the importance of keeping in touch with staff experiencing extended illnesses, etc. The policy aim is to support colleagues in returning to work as soon as possible. Managers make sure suitable adjustments are in place to assist return where necessary and help staff work through issues to enable them to remain in work.

There are a number of support mechanisms in place to assist staff.

The occupational health referral scheme that has access to a wide range of specialist advice and supports people back into work in a managed way:

Sick pay provision for staff who unfortunately find themselves with a long term illness.

Optum, the Council's Employee Assistance Programme which offers a confidential advice service available 24/7 and expert counselling covering a wide range of situations including family issues, money management, personal crisis, and illness.

The staff attendance management information for the current and past three years is shown below. The table shows the average number of full time equivalent (FTE) days lost per employee in each area from 2103/14 to date. It also shows the percentage of the total workforce that each area represents.

Oxford City compares favourably to local government sector benchmark averages of 7.5 days per employee.

SERVICE AREA	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 (project ed)	Approx % of total workfor ce (2016/17 )
<b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	7.9	7.09	6.81	6.96	<b>100</b>
<b>Community Services Directorate (excl Direct Services)</b>	3.49	3.81	2.60	2.35	<b>11</b>
<b>Direct Services</b>	10.52	9.26	8.77	9.80	<b>51</b>
<b>OD &amp; Corporate Services Directorate</b>	7.29	6.68	5.51	4.56	<b>23</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Housing Directorate</b>	5.93	4.64	5.25	4.65	<b>14</b>
<b>Senior Management and Asst Chief Exec</b>	0.00	1.00	1.54	0.00	<b>1</b>

\*Although absence levels have reduced significantly at Direct Services, they remain higher than the rest of the Council. This is to be expected given the nature of the work and the working conditions. Direct Services have a robust process in place for managing sickness absence, using their HR Business Partner and the services of Occupational Health to help support the employee back to work at the earliest opportunity.

### **Supplementary question**

What steps are being taken to reduce the upward trend in Direct Services?

### **Response**

I will provide a written answer.

## **Board member for Housing**

### **7. From Councillor Goff to Councillor Rowley**

Would the Board member agree that it would be a good idea to consider loft extensions as a way of increasing larger social housing accommodation?

### **Written Response**

As part of the Council's asset management strategy the Council does identify opportunities for extending or modifying homes where there is potential. There is a range of projects in progress, which includes loft extensions. The use of loft extensions does depend on the type of housing and the accommodation it creates, and not all structures are suitable. The potential impact of the Bedroom Tax can also make such development less attractive.

## **8. From Councillor Goff to Councillor Rowley**

A survey of tenants and residents satisfaction (STAR) report in 2015 is based on only a 19% response.

Is this

- (i) acceptable?
- (ii) a true indicator on which to draw conclusions and influence future work programmes?

And what steps are being taken to improve such consultation?

### **Written Response**

(i) The response rate is lower than we would wish and this follows additional work by the survey company to raise the response rate. The survey follows a national standard methodology, and we understand that response rates to this survey have fallen across the country. A reason for the low response rate is that the City Council undertakes this survey every year, whilst many social landlords undertake this survey every three or five years. Some landlords have discontinued the survey.

(ii) The City Council relies on a range of engagement with residents and tenants to inform its work programmes, and the STAR survey is only a small part of this. The City Council is one of only three Local Authority landlords who have achieved accreditation with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and is seen as a leading Council in this respect. The Council uses our Tenant Scrutiny Panel extensively. We also have a range of tenant groups and local consultations which focus on solutions for specific issues (in a format known as Appreciative Enquiry), where tenants bring their own experience to inform future work programmes. In common with other landlords the Council already places increasing emphasis on this approach rather than general surveys.

### **Supplementary question**

Are there any additional steps to improve the consultation?

### **Response**

These are set out in the response. The Tenants' Panel is also consulted and officers find their responses and views helpful.

## **Board member for Leisure, Parks and Sport**

## **9. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Smith**

Given the current concern about obesity and unhealthy eating, will you be asking Fusion Leisure to restrict the products in their vending machines to healthy snacks rather than chocolate and sweets?

### **Written Response**

It's important that there are healthy options when it comes to food and drink in our leisure centres and we are currently working with Fusion on a trial of vending machines stocked only with healthy choices at the Leys Pools and Leisure Centre and at the new gym at Oxford Spires Academy. If the trial scheme is successful we will expect it to be rolled out to other facilities.

### **Supplementary question**

When will the report from the trial scheme be available?

### **Response**

I will provide a written answer.

## **Board member for Planning and Regulatory Services**

### **10. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Hollingsworth**

I note that the all-day weekday parking permits for Oxpens for £6 must be ordered online via the Council's website, can the Lead Member please let us know what other ways to book permits are available for those who do not have internet access?

### **Written Response**

The offer is only available for customers that purchase the permit online via the council's website. This model is very similar to those adopted across e-commerce and encourages customers to use a particular platform that provides a benefit for the provider and receiver. Additional staffing resources were not required to support initiative, as the system processes the order. That having been said, if a customer was not able to access the internet via their home, work or smartphone, they could utilise the computers located on the ground floor of the Council offices at St Aldates Chambers

It should be noted the Office for National Statistics stated in August 2015 that 86% of the population had access to the internet, with the figure rising year on year. In addition, it has been estimated that 45 million people in the UK own a smartphone. Once these figures have been considered, the Council is confident that the offer is open to the vast majority of customers. .

### **Supplementary question**

Could customer services staff make bookings for people who are unable to use a computer themselves?

### **Response**

I will provide a written response.

### **11. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Hollingsworth**

I note the Lead Member's decision to introduce pre-paid weekday all-day parking permits for £6 in Oxpens Car Park because of under-capacity due in part to continuing works.

Can the Lead Member please indicate what percentage of under-capacity of city-owned car parks triggers the reduction of parking tariffs?

### **Written Response**

During the Westgate building works the Oxpens car park has not been full during the day on weekdays. After careful consideration, the Council introduced all day permits available for advance purchase for use during those hours. The price was carefully

calibrated to attract cars already parking in other city centre locations, such as Gloucester Green where usage has increased and where the car park is full on most days, rather than to bring new traffic into the city centre. It is hoped that the promotional offer will help to reduce congestion in Gloucester Street, for example. There is no percentage threshold, and each car park's tariffs are considered on a case by case basis. Meetings are held regularly to ensure the city's car parks are well utilised. If either under used capacity or excess demand is identified at a particular site, officers investigate and may propose measures to address the issue.

## **12. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth**

Can the Board Member for Planning advise when the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area (Novsca) Appraisal, promised by its author for January 2016, will become available?

### **Written Response**

The task of completing the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area appraisal was given to an external contractor, someone well-known in this relatively small and tight-knit professional field, and someone who came with excellent references. The terms of the contract were such that payment would be made upon delivery of the completed appraisal. Despite giving regular assurances that the project was progressing, and despite being granted further time to complete the work, the contractor has failed to deliver the appraisal. The contractor has now told Council officers that he has faced particular issues, but has not offered any further explanation or any plausible schedule for delivery of the required reports. As a result the contract has been terminated forthwith, and no payment whatsoever has been or will be made. A new contractor will be appointed shortly. This is an extremely disappointing situation, and the new contractor will be managed extremely closely to ensure timely delivery of a suitable final appraisal.

### **Supplementary question**

The delay is becoming disastrous because of the impact on the Local Plan development and other planning policy documents. What has happened about the contractor's other work with the Council?

### **Response**

The contractor has no other commitments with the Council in any capacity and we will be very careful with subsequent appointments for this work.

## **13. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Hollingsworth**

This month's Planning Committees' list of appeals showed that three applications had been appealed on grounds of non-determination.

Can the Lead Member please give the numbers of appeals for non-determination over the past 5 years, and is he able to give an assurance that procedures are now in place to ensure that applications will be determined within statutory timeframe in the event that case officers are off sick?

### **Written Response**

Over the past 5 years a total of 13 appeals have been lodged against the Council on the grounds of non-determination. This includes the 3 referred to by Cllr Wilkinson referenced in the July West and East Planning Committee agendas. The 3 appeals are linked in that they are for one site and for the same applicant. For information (but not directly comparable data) there have been 48 appeals lodged in the 12 months between June 2015 and May 2016

In order to ensure applications are dealt with within the statutory timeframe the Planning & Regulatory Service has been putting in place a number of actions to improve the performance and quality of the service. This includes a greater focus on and use of performance management information to manage individual officers caseloads and ensure statutory targets are met, minimising the risk of appeals being lodged on grounds of non-determination. In respect of the 3 appeals referred to the cases were reassigned but the officer to whom they were assigned failed to deal with them. That officer no longer works for the Council.

### **14. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Hollingsworth**

Would the Lead Member please indicate how many B56 planning applications have been made since the relevant legislation was passed to bring office space into use as residential accommodation, bearing in mind initial speculation when legislation was passed that there would only be six or seven across the whole country?

### **Written Response**

The 'prior approval' system introduced from 30 May 2013 by the Coalition Government allows the change of use from use class B1a (office) to use class C3 (residential) without the need for full planning permission. Whilst developers must seek prior approval from the City Council to undertake the change of use, the ONLY issues that can be considered are flooding, land contamination, highways and transport.

This means that these applications cannot be assessed against the full range of policies in Oxford's Local Plan and our usual policy requirements, such as affordable housing and energy efficiency, cannot be applied. In 2014/15 this meant that Oxford missed out on approximately 32 affordable homes that would normally have been sought if Local Plan policies were applied. We were also unable to secure any financial contributions towards affordable housing from smaller B56 applications during this period.

To date we have received 47 B56 prior approval applications, the outcomes of which are shown below:

- Prior approval required and granted 28
- Prior approval required and refused 7
- Prior approval not required 5
- Application withdrawn 4
- Application pending consideration 3

### **Supplementary question**

Is my understanding correct that there is no power to require adequate amenity space on these developments?

### **Response**

Yes, this is one of the many reasons this policy was poorly thought out, and we continue to press government ministers for a change in policy.

### **15. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Hollingsworth**

The new Local Plan 2036 will be a very important document, taking the city forward for the next twenty years. There has been very limited publicity of this consultation. Local groups and community associations will want to discuss their responses to the consultation at their meetings, which often take place only monthly or even less frequently. Ending the consultation period on August 5th will mean that many groups will not have had time to meet and discuss and respond.

Would you consider extending the deadline for another two weeks at least to allow more time for more people to submit their views on this key document?

### **Written Response**

Unfortunately the councillor has misunderstood the nature and scope of the current period of consultation. The Local Plan 2036 process is currently timetabled to take a little over three years to complete, with three different periods of consultation taking place, one each year. The consultation in year two will be on the City Council's preferred options, and the consultation in year three will be on the final document. The consultation this year – which is not statutorily required but which I regard as a very important part of the process – takes the form of consultation with all the community groups and other consultees with whom the City Council is in regular contact AND additional events where officers can meet members of the public in an informal environment to get their views on what challenges the city faces and therefore what the priorities for the 2036 Local Plan ought to be.

Community associations and amenity groups, as well as others with an interest in the development of the new Local Plan, will continue to have access to officers to influence the shape of the emerging policies throughout the three years of the Plan-making process. Any input from them will be considered and form part of the process, whether it is received before or after 5th August. Residents associations and amenity groups were contacted directly two weeks before the start of the consultation specifically so that they would have an opportunity to schedule in to their meetings discussions about the consultation, if they so wished.

Finally, I would disagree with the suggestion that there has been limited publicity of this consultation. There have been weekly stories in the local press – both in print and on radio and television – over the last few weeks, as well as adverts in the Oxford Mail and Oxfordshire Guardian, and an advert on the online version of the Oxford Mail is running for the length of the consultation. A piece was included in Your Oxford, which is delivered to every household in the city. Videos that I made to promote the consultation have been viewed more than 80,000 times by just under 30,000 different individuals, and together with other Tweets and Facebook messages we have so far reached more than 33,000 different people; by the end of the consultation period we expect that figure

to exceed 50,000. So far more than 1300 of those viewers have followed the link to the consultation pages on our website.

Leaflets and posters have backed up the media campaign and are distributed in public locations around the city, such as community centres, libraries and leisure centres. Many of the 174 residents and amenity groups directly notified of the consultation have spread the word to members of their groups and have requested extra leaflets to give out. We also sent out about 1500 direct notifications to those on our database.

### **Supplementary question**

Why was north Oxford omitted from the original list of consultation stops and added at the last minute?

### **Response**

A clerical error in compiling the original list resulted in omitting Summertown. This was rectified.

## **16. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Hollingsworth**

A resident rang the Out-of-Hours number recently because of noise nuisance, had to wait for 40 minutes for the phone to be answered, then was told there was nothing that could be done.

Would you agree that this is a very unsatisfactory service, not to say an unacceptable one?

### **Written Response**

Officers believe that this question refers to a complaint about the ongoing roadworks at Wolvercote Roundabout which the Duty Officer was unable to resolve on the night in question. The following evening the Duty Officer attended the site twice at different times and found on both occasions that the works were adhering to the consent conditions. With a limited number of officers, it is not always possible to attend every location immediately, nor are all complaints suitable for attendance on the night. The case notes and phone logs do not suggest that there was a 40 minute wait for the call to be answered, so if the Councillor could pass on more details to the relevant officers that aspect of the question will be investigated further.

## **17. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Hollingsworth**

Given the high number of people now renting rather than owning their homes, it is clearly ever more important that these homes meet at least minimum standards of safety and suitability. It is also very important that landlords are encouraged to accommodate people on benefits as well as those able to pay themselves. The response rate to the consultation on the proposed Private Sector Housing policy was lamentable – only 58 responses which cannot be considered remotely representative or a sound basis from which to draw conclusions.

Would you consider reviewing the methods used and acknowledge that not all landlords were contacted, making the reported findings totally unfit for use?

### **Written Response**

This issue was discussed at the CEB, and while having a higher rate of response can always be helpful, I do not agree at all that the response rate was lamentable, nor that the findings are in any way unfit for use. The consultation process for the Policy closely mirrored that which was used for the renewal of the HMO Licensing scheme, so there can be no doubt that landlords and agents were provided with ample opportunity to respond should they have chosen to do so. As the report to CEB made clear, any extension of the current HMO licensing scheme to other parts of the private rented sector will require further reports, legal advice and another consultation.

### **Supplementary question**

How did you identify the landlords to contact and how were these selected?

### **Response**

I will provide a written answer.

## **18. From Councillor Gant to Councillors Hollingsworth and Price**

Would the Leader give council an update on the delivery of OxPens and the appointment of the developer partner with the Joint Venture (company), and his assessment of whether Brexit materially affects prospects for the future occupancy of the site and, as a result, the council's exposure to risk?

### **Written Response**

Oxford West End Developments Ltd has appointed a consortium of JLL and Bidwells to act as its development advisor. Current activity is focussed on developing the strategy and timing for procurement of a developer partner which it is anticipated will be undertaken by Spring 2017 with a view to starting on site in 2018. Much of the recent hiatus in the property market has been caused by the uncertainty around the question of the nature of Brexit and the consequential impacts. We should know the answer to this question or at least have a much better idea by the time we are looking for occupiers. In any event given the tight supply of City Centre land, a healthy local residential market with no sign of oversupply, and a commercial market not overly dependent on financial services I think it unlikely that Brexit will materially and detrimentally affect occupancy.

## **19. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Hollingsworth**

Can the Leader please give an update on a code of practice for estate agents and letting agents in the City?

### **Written Response**

Officers from Planning and Regulatory Services have held several meetings with agents to explore the issues and the possibilities of introducing a voluntary code of practice regarding letting boards.

It was clear that there was some appetite for using fewer boards and even creating a board-free city, but the agents were all adamant that there must be a level playing field including both letting and estate agents that is strictly enforced before they are prepared to take part.

At present the Council does not have the planning enforcement capacity to proactively enforce a voluntary code of practice, but once the restructure of Planning and Regulatory Services has bedded in we will revisit priorities and consider whether there is any merit in pursuing a voluntary code of practice.

### **Supplementary question**

What is the timetable for this review and which committee or body will see the final report?

### **Response**

I would like this completed by the end of this municipal year. The committee which will see this will be determined by the content and recommendations of the report.

## **Leader of the Council, Board Member for Corporate Strategy and Economic Development**

### **20. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

At the time of writing (Friday 15 July), has the Executive seen the PWC report? If so, why haven't other members seen it, given that it is a publicly-funded document, not an internal one? If by the date of this council meeting the report has been released to members, is it in its full original form, and if not, why not?

### **Written Response**

The work on the PwC report is largely complete but is still to be finalised following discussions and feedback from civil servants. It has not therefore been shared with the Executive. DCLG have encouraged the city, districts and county to work together to explore the possibilities of a way forward that would command broad agreement. The city, districts and county have agreed to postpone publication of the studies that have been commissioned, and pause plans for consultation on proposals until a joint approach has been considered. A statement to that effect was jointly issued on 19th July.

### **Supplementary question**

The report remains relevant whatever the outcome so would it not be sensible to release it to the public sooner rather than later?

### **Response**

I agree it should be published, as should the separate report commissioned by the County Council. It would be best for all Oxfordshire's local authorities to review both together and see what can be drawn from both. This is best achieved by publishing both reports at the same time rather than one in advance of the other.

### **21. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

Would the leader give us a brief update of his most recent dealings with DCLG over devolution and local government reorganisation in the light of the change of government and Secretary of State?

### **Written Response**

Officers have met senior civil servants who have encouraged both tiers of Local Government in Oxfordshire to explore the possibilities of finding a joint approach. We have agreed with the County Council to a short period of informal purdah whilst options are explored. Currently this work is being undertaken at an officer's level and further discussions with government are planned. When options have been identified council leaders will want to discuss these and consult widely. The Secretary of State has only been in post for a matter of days and we would encourage him to redouble the government's commitment to working with local authorities on devolution and for government to be less prescriptive in terms of structures and in particular requirements to have an elected mayor.

### **22. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

Will the Leader join me in echoing calls from the LGA for representatives of local government to be involved in forthcoming negotiations with the European Union from the outset and at the highest level, in order to safeguard links between local authorities and our European partners and visitors?

### **Written Response**

Yes.

### **23. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

Will the leader set up a Working group to monitor the practical impact of Brexit on Oxford and its economy and explore ground for mitigating those effects, including representatives of industry, tourism, academia, education, the NHS, the construction and property sectors, and others?

### **Written Response**

That would be premature until Article 50 is triggered and the approach that is being taken by the Government to the negotiation of a new treaty is clear.

### **Supplementary question**

Should we try to get 'ahead of the curve' on working on mitigating the impacts?

### **Response**

I will ask the Leader for a written response.

### **24. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

Will the leader write to our friends in our Twin cities within the EU reminding them that the people of Oxford voted overwhelmingly to Remain, and that they remain welcome here?

### **Written Response**

As Councillor Gant knows, this was done

## **25. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Price**

Will the Leader join me in reassuring our many European visitors, tourists and business people that we have shared values, and a shared European cultural heritage, and that we welcome them here with great pleasure and friendship - and will demonstrate this by creating a new logo for the city: 'Oxford - a proud European city'

### **Written Response**

Yes to the first part of the question. No to the second: a new logo would need serious consideration in relation to cost and use. I am happy to undertake that consideration on a cross party basis over the next few months.

### **Supplementary question**

Can we publicise this message as soon as possible and as widely as possible?

### **Response**

I agree with the sentiment but we have to be careful that we do not inadvertently make one group feel less welcome by emphasising our welcome of another. We wish to welcome all our many visitors and residents.

## **26. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

Will the leader inform council of any initiatives to work with Cambridge and other university cities to protect the vital interests of academics against the effects of Brexit, in terms of funding, free movement, and general ongoing uncertainty?

### **Written Response**

Universities UK is already involved in discussions with the government on all these issues and the City Council will contribute to them as necessary and appropriate during the negotiating period.

## **27. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price**

A draft of a message issued by the Leader immediately after the EU referendum began by stating that "all members" of Oxford City Council regretted the result. The final published version omitted the reference to "all members". Can the Leader explain this change of wording?

### **Written Response**

I can't recall why it was changed - probably because I felt that the text flowed with greater elegance, but Cllr Gant can rest assured that there was no implication about a lack of unanimity in Council- as evidenced by the vote at our last meeting.

**To:** Council

**Date:** 25 July 2016

**Title of Report:** Part 2 - Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision

**This document was updated following the meeting.**

## Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. Addresses as submitted by the speakers and written responses where available were published with the briefing note in advance of the meeting.
3. This report was republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack and replaces that published with the briefing note.
4. This lists:
  - the submitted text of speeches where delivered broadly as submitted, deleting parts not read out;
  - noteworthy amendments to reflect the spoken address in italics.
  - summaries of speeches delivered where these differed significantly from those submitted;
  - written responses published in the briefing note before the meeting; and
  - summaries of verbal responses by the Board Members given at the meeting.

## Addresses and questions taken in Part 2 of the agenda.

### Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Chaka Artwell - summer activities for young people – with summary of verbal response
2. Address by Chaka Artwell - Barton community facilities– with summary of verbal response
3. Address by Sharyn Hyde, PSPnO campaign group– with written and summary of verbal response
4. Address by Nigel Gibson - Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign– with written response
5. Address by Chaka Artwell - city centre PSPO– with written and summary of verbal response

### Questions in part 2

1. Question from Cressida Jervis Read – public events – with written and summary of verbal response

2. Question from Hazel Dawe – air quality – with written and summary of verbal response
  3. Question from Steve Dawe – private landlords – with written and summary of verbal response
  4. Question from Mr Chaka Artwell – letters to the Council - with written response
  5. Question from Judith Harley – FOI 5462 – Request For Catalyst Temple Cowley Pools (TCP) Lease - with written response
  6. Question from Ann Duncan– parishing the city - with written response
  7. Question from Elise Benjamin– Carnival - with written response
  8. Question from Matthew Ledbury – local funding - with written response
  9. Question from Sietske Boeles, CPRE Oxfordshire – Green Belt development - with written response
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## Addresses in part 2

### 1. Address by Chaka Artwell - summer activities for young people – with summary of verbal response

Why does Oxford City Council neglect the Youth of Oxford? With two weeks to go to the start of the six-week school holiday, my enquiries of the City Council Staff asking what holiday provision has been made for the thousands of Oxford Youth, reveals that very little provision has been made.

For example, I asked Mr Jason Carbon for details of his annual, and popular "wrap around" daily summer sports activity, which has operated from Barton's Bayard's Hill School, and in Barton generally, since 1996. Mr Carbon's programme has traditionally been a vital component for the Youth of Barton, primarily because the programme is well organised and staffed, and operates from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with affordable fees. This greatly assists working parents, and provides for children who might otherwise have no structured play activities.

Mr Carbon informed me that his annual grant from Oxford City Council, for his Fun Activities, has been reduced by forty percent, making his programme unviable. Moreover, the Barton Community Association has not offered to fund the difference.

There is a very worrying dearth of community inspired activities for Oxford's Youth across the city and I believe the City Council policy of separating, and even "privatising", the management of community centres is partly responsible.

It is not acceptable that Oxford City Council has spent millions on "Community Centres" like Rose Hill, whilst at the same time destroying or undermining the management of those Community Centres traditionally managed by the community. This has happened in Rose Hill, Cowley, Northway, Barton and East Oxford.

The Council's dictatorial policy of undermining the tradition of community people managing their community centres has now led to the crisis whereby our Youth have no well structured, ordered and daily programme of "wrap around" activities to look forward to. Moreover, local people no longer feel they have the access to community centres or the influence to address this ruinous situation for our Youth.

It is acknowledge by Head teachers and the Police that organised activities for our Youth greatly reduces youthful nuisance behaviour. Oxford City Council's "Street Sport" summer offering, as welcome as it is, is a patchy, two hour, city wide programme of weekly activities which does not begin to meet the needs of Oxford's Youth for structured, daily, "wrap around"

summer activities. For example, there is little for the under tens; or for girls; or for those who are not motivated by football or sport in general. Why are the Youth being so neglected?

Why is Oxford City Council giving corporations like Green Square a management role which effectively privatises Community facilities, alienating local people from actively providing ideas to meet community need? Who speaks for the Youth within the City Council? Will you fully fund Mr Carbon's grant? How will the Council redress the lack of varied organised activity for the Youth of Oxford during the summer holidays?

Chaka Artwell, Barton, Oxford.

**Summary of the verbal response given by Councillors Simm and Kennedy at the meeting**

The Council is working with local people and community association groups to strengthen them, there are a wide range of different activities across the city directly provided or indirectly funded from the Council's youth ambition scheme and street sports, including in Barton. Added to the provision of free swimming on some days and the Council's parks and open spaces, there was good provision for young people.

## **2. Address by Chaka Artwell - Barton community facilities– with summary of verbal response**

The people of Sandhills & Barton rightly feel powerless, neglected and excluded from any consultation that directly impacts the residents of this City ward. For example, the expenditure of the recent 3.7 million-pound regeneration fund was allocated in March without any energetic efforts to consult with even the active groups on the estate.

I understand that Oxford City Council will be spending millions of pounds reconstructing the flats and the shops at Barton's Underhill Circus as a means of "gentrifying" Barton; this is in keeping with the City Council's policy of making Oxford a "world class city", where the working poor will not be made welcome. There has been no meaningful local consultation for this major development which will impact greatly on the people of Barton.

In the recent City Council elections in May, over two hundred people in Sandhills and Barton shared my great concern at the diminution of community facilities on the ward, and voted for the message that "Barton people need a place to celebrate & Party."

The Royal British Royal has closed. St. Mary's Church Community Hall has closed. The Sports Pavilion has closed in order to provide access for the new estate. In September 2015, at the Barton Community Association's AGM, the BCA Secretary stated that the Neighbourhood Centre has not had a celebration for any Youth from the estate for the last two years. This is on an estate with well over 800 people under the age of eighteen.

The way the people of Sandhills & Barton are being treated by the City Council officers and the Elected Councillors is an affront to the principles of democracy.

Can you please inform me, and the two-hundred-plus people of the constituency who are equally concerned to know, what the City Council's plans are to address the severe lack of Community facilities on the estate? Can you guarantee that the site of the former Royal British Legion will be retained for "licensed" community benefit and managed by the people of the estate?

Chaka Artwell, Barton, Oxford.

### **Summary of the verbal response given by Councillor Simm at the meeting**

### **3. Address by Sharyn Hyde, PSPnO campaign group– with written and summary of verbal response**

My name is Sharyn Hyde. I'm here as a representative of the PSPnO campaign group, which was formed to oppose the Waterways PSPO. I am addressing you here today to ask that you oppose the implementation of a PSPO on Oxford's waterways as short-sighted, unworkable and likely to increase problems on Oxford's waterways. It was developed in discussion with local housed residents and landowners, and with very little involvement with boat dwellers, despite the terms primarily affecting us. We ask that instead of supporting the PSPO you use this opportunity to create positive alternatives that build on Oxford's rich waterways heritage and increase cohesion between communities.

#### **The PSPO is unworkable for many reasons. A few examples are:**

- Making it a crime to moor in ways permitted by primary legislation criminalises legitimate boating activity. Seeking permission from the landowner when mooring is often not possible.
- The PSPO is too poorly worded and non-specific as to be enforceable, unless OCC wishes to ban all mooring in Oxford.
- If the river is in flood conditions, it isn't safe to move. In the winter, this can be for several weeks, even months.
- The PSPO may lead to reduced boat presence in some areas. Boat presence often limits anti-social behaviour.
- Boaters use solid fuel stoves to heat their homes, and engines to generate electricity. Both of these are protected under international human rights law. Boats are homes and yet these homes could be left unheated and without lighting, running water or power during winter because of the PSPO.
- The implementation of the PSPO is susceptible to "vexatious complainers". How can this be judged by an enforcement official?

#### **Boaters' experience prejudice in a number of ways:**

We are concerned that introducing a PSPO will escalate existing tensions between boaters and local residents and city council officers. Some examples of harassment include:

- Several boaters moored on visitor moorings in Jericho have experienced questioning as to how long they planned to stay, being told (incorrectly) by local residents how long they are allowed to stay for, and some residents have alluded to the PSPO and made derogatory comments about 'breaking the rules' to boat dwellers who have been doing nothing wrong.
- We have heard reports of council officers threatening boaters with the PSPO.
- Boaters have been criticised for polluting the area, or creating smells.

I personally have been told by a CRT employee that local residents in Jericho were anti boater and that BW (CRT's predecessor) had to fight to retain the one 7 day mooring stretch in the City. I was also shocked on another occasion to hear the views of someone who lives along the waterway and had known me for some time talk about boaters as people who steal things and don't pay their way. I left Oxford City in July 2014 due to poor conditions of mooring sites and antagonistic landowners. The individual and systemic pressures affect us in multiple ways. I had to sign a piece of paper declaring myself homeless to enable myself to vote. I am not homeless. I love

boating. It's not an easy lifestyle, but I accept that as part of my choice. What I didn't realise was how much the sense of being unwelcome and feeling that I constantly needed to watch my behaviour eroded my sense of peace and relaxation. I didn't realise this until I stopped very recently after having successfully bid for a mooring. The PSPO would increase this feeling for all boat dwellers throughout the City of Oxford and would legitimise those who harass boaters for simply being there.

### **Positive Alternatives To The PSPO:**

The use of a PSPO narrows down the options for collaborative solutions between OCC, housed residents and boat dwellers on the waterways in and around Oxford. The PSPO will create divisions between waterways users, housed residents, and OCC. We have seen that UMBEG didn't work as it was enforcement based and had no effective boater representation.

Alternatively, the time, effort and expertise of all the groups and agencies currently involved could be used to find genuine, sustainable solutions to the problems that the PSPO claims it will deal with. Oxford City and County Council has an excellent track record in working with a range of stakeholders to create positive solutions to problems in other areas, and developing social infrastructure that lasts over the years. The creation of Low Carbon Oxford, and the ongoing support the County Council provides to the Community Action groups (CAGS) are hallmarks of good practice across the UK. Instead of bringing in a PSPO, this is an opportunity for creative thinking. The council could establish a working group along the lines of its already established area forums, with full participation of all waterways users and residents.

We note that no other Local Authority in the entire UK has used a PSPO for enforcement on the waterways. Oxford is conspicuous in being the only authority pursuing this, which is surprising given its strong record in Council- community collaboration in other areas. This is an opportunity for Oxford City Council to embrace and work with the expertise, goodwill, experience, dedication and commitment of residential boat dwellers, and other waterways users, to generate a positive example of lasting social and physical infrastructure.

### **Written Response from Councillor Sinclair**

Thank you for your submission to Council on the draft Waterways PSPO for consultation. I found our meeting with the PSPNo group very useful and constructive where we discussed many of the concerns you raise in your submission. 'I want to give sufficient time for further stakeholder discussions to ensure we look at alternative solutions thoroughly and will review the position in 6 months' time, before any wider public consultation takes place.

### **Summary of the verbal response given by Councillor Sinclair at the meeting**

Thank you for your comments and for coming to speak to us, and we will continue to talk to you and will take more time to decide on the best way to resolve the anti-social behaviour creating problems for all waterways users.

My name's Nigel Gibson, and I am speaking to you this evening as a member of the Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools.

As many of you may be aware, the Campaign has been running since 2009, when the public first became aware of the City Council's intention to close the centre. Despite massive public opposition as it became clear and evident that the reasons put forward for closure by the City Council were a combination of inaccurate, incomplete, misleading and untrue, the Labour majority on the City Council, opposed as well by the other parties, in particular the Greens, voted for closure in December 2014.

You might think that, 18 months after closure, that support for it would wane as Labour's political decision fades into a distant memory, people move away from the area, or are forced, if it's still sensible for them, to make alternative arrangements, costing more in time and money.

And this was brought into sharp relief to me, talking to someone a few weeks ago. "But it's only a leisure centre," she said, "there are far more important things than that...". In one sense she was absolutely right; the recent violent events around the world do certainly put things into perspective; but this is and remains a local issue, that directly affects local people. And not just a few; the closure has had a direct effect on 40,000 people, who, through the City Council breaching its own core policy CS21, can no longer sensibly walk, cycle or use public transport to get to the leisure centre.

The term leisure centre conjures up the idea of a bit of fun, and is totally misleading as it masks the true value that a place for health and exercise that Temple Cowley Pools, and all the other leisure centres you operate, represent.

This is not simply a luxury that you can regard as low priority, and something you can easily dismiss as an unnecessary cost compared to other issues. The closure of Temple Cowley Pools has affected so many people in so many different ways.

- Children learning to swim and being confident in water, developing their independence because it's close enough to walk or cycle to.
- Schools – who saved time/money by walking rather than having to use a coach, and integrating swimming into a learning programme by visiting the library at the same time
- Enabling the disadvantaged – Temple Cowley Pools provided a stepping stone to help rehabilitating drug users/homeless by giving them a routine for socialising and integrating back into society.
- People recovering after an accident
- The infirm/disabled maintaining/improving their fitness
- A shared social space for community cohesion – with the open style single-sex changing rooms rather than the hated 'village changing'
- Supporting 'family time' to walk/cycle together, as a family

- Elderly – maintaining fitness levels so they are fitter, more able and independent for longer, and thus more value to society through their independence – and in so doing save costs to the NHS
- People fitting exercise conveniently between work and other commitments
- The only leisure centre in the city that can offer proper women-only sessions throughout the building

And, of course, there is the simple pleasure of taking exercise for the sake of it

We can tell, using Freedom of Information, that Labour councillors are not enamoured that we come back to remind you of the folly of your decision. But you should remember why we do this – it's the massive support that we still receive whenever we meet the public – collecting signatures for the latest petition, or as earlier in July when we were at the Cowley Road Carnival. It's that level of support, and the stories we hear about how long it now takes people, how much more it costs, why they don't or can't get their exercise as frequently, or even at all, now that you have closed Temple Cowley Pools that means the Campaign will continue – even the destruction of Temple Cowley Pools, with its beautiful interior, will not stop us campaigning for a proper replacement where people want it, in Cowley. And although your 'good news' culture interprets overcrowding as success, it's evident that since the closure of Temple Cowley Pools there has been much pressure on classes and also attendances across the other public leisure centres.

We have, however, been delighted with the recent change in Labour strategy. During the last council elections, Councillor Malik announced that Labour will build a new pool on the Cowley Marsh Works site within ten years. We welcome this, and look forward to working with the council to ensure that the facilities people want, like a diving pool, are included this time. And we were pleased that Councillor Smith came to our stall at the Cowley Road Carnival, asking what could be done to provide people with what they want – we look forward to meeting with her as soon as practicable to develop these facilities.

The need for health and fitness facilities in Cowley remains – what you have in place at present is inadequate and you have breached your own CS21 policy by closing Temple Cowley Pools. These facilities are vital, not a luxury, particularly for an area that's seen the highest population growth across the city since the turn of the century in a neglected part of Oxford, and I look forward to this Labour council doing the right thing and fulfilling your promises for the people you have been elected to represent.

#### **4. Address by Nigel Gibson - Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign– with written response**

##### **Written response from Councillor Smith**

Oxford City Council does not regard it's leisure services as a 'luxury' and our strategy is set out in our Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 to 2020, which clearly recognises its value. Leisure is not only enjoyable in its own right, but supports community cohesion cutting across social divides and improves physical and mental health. Our aim is to increase participation rates in leisure activities across the city and our partnership with Fusion Lifestyle has delivered results.

1. The overall number of visits to leisure facilities in 2015/16 was more than 1.44 million, this is an increase of 71% (598,000 more visits per year) since we started the contact with Fusion Lifestyle in 2009.

2. In 2015/16 the number of visits to leisure facilities by target groups increased 194% from 2009 (c400,000 more visits per year).

3. Visits by young people through the council funded free swimming sessions has increased by 10%; more than 2,200 more visits and 900 more young people registered for free swim cards.

4. Across Oxford leisure facilities: In 2015/16:

- swimming lessons completed increased by 63%; 34,000 more lessons completed year on year.
- Schools term time swimming lessons increased by 6%; 2,500 more lessons completed year on year.
- Overall swimming visits increased by 36%; 70,500 more visits year on year.
- Overall visits to leisure facilities increased by 10%; 130,000 more visits year on year
- Overall visits by:
  - those under 17 years of age increased by 28%; 58,000 more visits year on year
  - residents in wards of deprivation increased 81%; 72,800 visits year on year
  - Black, Minority & Ethnic customers increased 31%, 9,000 more visits year on year
  - Customers aged over 50 years increased 27%; 26,500 more visits year on year
  - Women and Girls has increased by 28 per cent; 110,000 more visits year on year.

I understand why Temple Cowley Residents who used Temple Cowley Pool were sad to see it go, and it is true that those local residents now have to travel further to swim. However, it has been replaced with an up-to-date first class facility in nearby Blackbird Leys which has resulted in a dramatic increase in users, a wider leisure offer and a reduction in carbon emissions.

Furthermore, Cowley has a new gym open to the public at the Oxford Spires Academy, (as a result of a partnership between the school, Oxford City Council and Fusion Lifestyle). Pure Gym have also recently opened a facility at Templars Square adding to various other non-council provision in the area.

I am always interested in talking to any Oxford residents with ideas about how to increase participation at our leisure centres, and if members of the STCP campaign group wish to make positive suggestions about how to further improve take up by Cowley residents at our facilities then I would welcome a discussion.

## **5. Address by Chaka Artwell - city centre PSPO<sup>1</sup>– with written and summary of verbal response**

As reported in the Oxford Mail on 6th July, Cllr Mike Rowley's behaviour at the Town Hall EU Referendum count raises serious questions about the inconsistent attitude of the Oxford Labour Party to antisocial behaviour. Cllr Rowley's Labour Party pushed hard for the implementation of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) to tackle the sort of behaviour described in the Oxford Mail report, which necessitated the intervention of the Door Supervisors and ultimately Police Constables, who then escorted Councillor Rowley home, courtesy of the Council Tax Payers of Oxford. The Oxford Mail article stated that Cllr Rowley has apologised, by saying he made a "bit of a tit of himself" and that "the Labour Party confirmed it would take no disciplinary action over the incident."

Despite huge opposition to PSPO's from the Greens, Oxford University, Liberty and others, in February this year, Oxford City Centre became a PSPO Zone. As the Town Hall is in the City Centre, one would expect PSPO measures, such as handcuffing, public strip-searching, threats of use of Taser or CS Gas, or an On The Spot Fine, to be applied to anti-social behaviour on these premises. If Police are called to intervene when anti-social behaviour occurs, one might expect a Police Caution to be issued for this behaviour.

Readers of the Mail report might be baffled that none of these Actions were taken. Readers might speculate that the status of Councillor, and being Caucasian, provides protection from such Actions. The experience of Mr Ali (reported in the Oxford Mail on 29th June) is testimony to the different actions people of colour and the poor receive. Mr Ali was purchasing pet food when Thames Valley Police Constables treated him as if he was guilty of a crime. He was detained, denied his liberty, and publicly handcuffed, on a mere allegation from a suspect in Police custody.

Clearly, Oxford Labour and Thames Valley Police are selective with their application of the law. People of colour are instinctively aware of this; however, working class people, rough sleepers and others must be made aware that they are deemed second class citizens as Oxford City Council marches on with its policy of transforming Oxford into a "world class city" for the affluent and the well travelled.

Why should Councillors receive special treatment for their irresponsible behaviour, and be regarded as being above Labour's PSPO Law? We, the people, should not be content to allow Councillors to escape from penalties

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<sup>1</sup> Public Spaces Protection Order. The City Council has approved a City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order from 1 February 2016 and a Foresters Town PSPO.

to which others, especially people of colour, would be subjected. Labour – be consistent. I have some questions for you on this matter:

First: As one of our “elected representatives” Councillor Rowley should set standards of behaviour, not be excused bad behaviour. The Mail report, that “the Labour Party confirmed it would take no disciplinary action over the incident” seems to excuse bad behaviour. Can all others expect the same leniency for similar behaviour?

Second: If you are not going to penalise Cllr Rowley for his public display of antisocial behaviour, when will you be consistent and scrap the PSPO’s for everyone else’s antisocial behaviour?

Chaka Artwell, Barton

### **Written Response from Councillor Price**

The City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order provides controls against a range of anti social behaviours including urination and defecation in a public place, misuse of public toilets, unlawful trading, cycling in prohibited areas, aggressive begging and failure to control dogs. None of these behaviours have any bearing on the incident referred to which occurred in the foyer of the Town Hall on 23 June. Any complaints about differential policing related to ethnic origin should be made to the Police and Crime Commissioner or the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

### **Summary of the verbal response given by Councillor Hollingsworth, in the absence of Councillor Price, at the meeting**

The specific behaviours proscribed in the PSPO are clear and Councillor Rowley did not contravene the Order

## Questions in part 2

### 1. Question from Cressida Jervis Read – public events – with written and summary of verbal response

Question to the Board Member, Councillor Simm

In the light of problems experienced by the Oxford Stays event, can the Leader please provide clarity on when organised public events need to comply with the event team guidance on, for example, insurance, and how this impacts on the right of free protest?

#### **Written Response from Councillor Simm**

While Oxford City Council does not officially approve or authorise protests, it strongly supports the right to free protest. In the interests of public safety we would always encourage protest organisers to follow appropriate safety guidelines.

Protests in Oxford are regulated by Thames Valley Police and protest organisers have the obligation to notify TVP about their plans. If the proposed protest is to take place on Oxford City Council land, protest organisers should check with the council about any requirements it might have. Oxford City Council will always place the highest priority on public safety and arrangements that organisers have in place to ensure this. We will also need to be sure that the site of the proposed protest has not been previously allocated to a licensed event.

Where a protest becomes an organised event, which includes infrastructure such as a stage, we might recommend that organisers should hold adequate insurance and that their plans are risk assessed.

### 2. Question from Hazel Dawe – air quality – with written and summary of verbal response

Question to the Board Member, Councillor Tanner

In view of the considerable problems with air quality in the City, will the council consider installing near real time air quality monitoring similar to that already operating in cities across the UK e.g. Bristol and review decisions such as that to discount City Centre car parking in the light of its implications for air quality?

#### **Written Response from Councillor Tanner**

The City Council already have 3 real time continuous monitors located in the City in the following locations: St. Aldates, High street and at St Ebbes School. In addition to this we monitor air quality at 75 locations across the city using diffusion tubes. Data from our monitoring can be found on the following website: <http://www.oxfordshire.air-quality.info/>

The City Council's car parking policy seeks to keep in balance the demand for parking and availability in the city centre. Since the closure of the Westgate Shopping centre the availability of car parking in the city centre has reduced significantly. Due to the high levels of disruption currently experienced in the city due to redevelopment, the Council felt it was appropriate to offer a reduced fee on a limited basis. Whilst we understand your concerns raised, we would like to reassure you that we encourage the use of alternative travel methods and people are encouraged to use the park and rides if travelling to Oxford by car.

### **3. Question from Steve Dawe – private landlords – with written and summary of verbal response**

Question to the Board Member, Councillor Hollingsworth

Only 5% of the 60 complaints against landlords made in 2015 led to convictions, according to information supplied to the Oxfordshire Guardian 21/4-27/4 edition. The National Landlords Association has called upon the Council to do more to combat what it describes as 'rogue landlords.' What measures will the City Council be putting in place to convict landlords guilty of illegalities?

#### **Written Response from Councillor Hollingsworth**

Oxford City Council is one of the leading Councils in the UK for taking enforcement action. These figures relate to a narrow freedom of information request and in 2015 the Council took legal action against 30 landlords - issuing 12 formal cautions and taking 18 prosecutions that resulted in a total of £102,916 of fines, costs and compensation for tenants.

Research published this year into private sector housing enforcement found that local authorities in England took a total of 95 prosecutions in 2013, which is an average of less than 1 for every council. In the same year, only 0.2% of complaints to local authorities resulted in a prosecution. In 2013 Oxford City Council took 9 prosecutions, i.e. the Council was responsible for nearly 10% of all the prosecutions taken nationally, which demonstrates our robust approach to tackling rogue landlords where necessary.

The Council is committed to improving and regulating the private rented sector, as evidenced by our recent renewal of the HMO Licensing Scheme and our adoption of a Private Sector Housing Policy this month that seeks to increase our licensing powers as well as continue our proactive approach to inspections and build upon our tough enforcement stance.

### **4. Question from Mr Chaka Artwell – letters to the Council - with written response**

Question to the Board Member, Councillor Brown

Lord Mayor, Elected Councillors, City Council Officers and Executive Officers: our democratic form of governance encourages the governed to fully participate in the democratic process by lobbying and writing to Ward Councillors and the servants of the City Council.

I have written numerous letters to City Council Officers and Councillors, many of which have received no reply. What is the City Council's policy, for both Officers and Councillors, regarding acknowledging and answering written communications from Ward or City residents?

Chaka Artwell, Barton, Oxford.

#### **Written Response from Councillor Brown**

The City Council is committed to putting the customer's needs first. We have consistent service standards across the organisation to make sure that no matter which part of the organisation Oxford residents come into contact with, they receive the same high standard of service

These service standards are the first indication to our customers of how we intend to do business, setting expectations and enabling us to manage demand so that we meet these expectations.

Officers aim to acknowledge and answer written communications and emails, and handle comments, complaints and compliments as follows:

**Emails, requests made via the Council’s website and written correspondence.**

- We aim to acknowledge each customer contact received within one working day, either giving an answer in full or setting an expectation of what will happen next.
- We aim to provide a substantive reply within five working days.
- If English is not your preferred language, we will provide a translation service for you on demand.
- We use a number of accessibility tools within our website to enable all customers to read or hear its content.

**Comments, complaints and compliments.**

- When you make a comment, complaint or compliment to the City Council, we will acknowledge this within three working days.
- We will provide you with a full response within 10 working days and if this is not possible, we will contact you again to let you know when you can expect to hear from us.

**Correspondence with councillors**

I cannot answer on behalf of all councillors. In my experience however, councillors of all parties work hard to represent their constituents and to respond to requests for advice and assistance. This is the case whether these are received by email, letter, telephone call or message or from encounters in the streets or from door knocking.

Inevitably councillors, many of whom work full time, will not always be able to respond immediately, but in my experience councillors are very good at picking up urgent case work quickly and responding appropriately to less urgent matters.

**5. Question from Judith Harley – FOI 5462 – Request For Catalyst Temple Cowley Pools (TCP) Lease - with written response**

Question to the Leader, Councillor Price

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

During December 2015 I had an exchange of e-mail correspondence with City Council Executive Officers, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI 5462), on the matter of Catalyst Housing Ltd being granted a 999 year lease to the Temple Cowley Pools (TCP) site. The existence of this lease was confirmed by Councillor Ed Turner in his written reply to my address to full Council on 7th December.

My first FOI 5462 questions were:

- “Can I have a copy of the lease contract?”
- “Is there a clause in the lease whereby Catalyst must return the property to the Council in the state in which they took it over?”

On 18th December I received the reply that:

“A copy of the lease between the Council and Catalyst Housing Ltd is publicly available from the Land Registry and can be accessed via the “Search for Property Information” portal on the Registry’s web site. The freehold title is ON299912 and the leasehold title ON316477.”

I responded that this reply did not answer my questions, as I already had copies of the relevant Land Registry documents, and neither of these showed the information I had requested. I repeated my request for a copy of the signed lease contract, with terms

and conditions, between Oxford City Council and Catalyst Housing Ltd. leasing the TCP site to Catalyst.

I received a second reply similar to the first:

“As [we] informed you, there are just the two documents: the contract for sale (a copy of which is available on the Council's web site) and the 999-year lease (a copy of which can be accessed via the Land Registry's web site).”

For the second time, I replied that this response still did not give me the information I sought, and for the third time, I requested the terms and conditions of the lease between Oxford City Council and Catalyst Housing Ltd. for the TCP site. I also asked the amount of rent due to be paid by Catalyst to Oxford City Council for the lease, and how much rent had actually been paid by Catalyst over the then twelve months since the lease was signed. I also asked specifically for any other terms and conditions of the lease, as I cannot find these in any of the documents so far referred.

I am still waiting for this information.

Following the lack of information from Executive Officers, I had also asked the Scrutiny Committee to investigate my requests, and although indications were that this would be addressed, it was not done.

This is not the first time that my FOI requests to the City Council over the TCP site have gone unanswered way over the statutory response time. In desperation I am now asking you, the full Council, to answer my questions, which are:

1. How much rent is due to be paid by Catalyst Housing Ltd. to Oxford City Council as part of their lease contract on the Temple Cowley Pools site?
2. How much rent has actually been paid by Catalyst over the now seventeen months since the lease was signed?
3. If the answer to either of the first two questions is “nothing”, then why is this the case? Why hasn't the City Council been generating an income from this site, either in rental or in operating as a running Pools and Fitness Centre, over the past seventeen months? Isn't this negligent use of City Council assets, and dereliction of the City Council's duty to maximise income from such assets?
4. How much income would the City Council have received from Temple Cowley Pools had it remained open and running, not abruptly closed in 2014, until such date as a planning application has been approved for the site?
5. Is there a clause in the lease whereby Catalyst must return the property to the Council in the state in which they took it over?
6. When can I have a copy of the full lease contract?

### **Written Response from Councillor Price**

There are two separate documents, a Lease (for 999 years) and the Contract for Sale. The two have been conflated in the FOI request and the question to Council. Both documents are available to the public: the Lease from the Land Registry, the Contract for Sale via the Council's web site. Under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information that is reasonably accessible by other means, as in this instance, does not need to be re-provided.

The answer to the specific questions are as follows:

1. The rent is a peppercorn
2. As stated above, no rent is payable. This reflects the fact that the long lease was created as an alternative to an immediate transfer of the freehold (which clearly

would have produced no rental income), while protecting the Council's position should Catalyst fail to obtain their planning consent. A substantial and non-refundable deposit was, however, paid by Catalyst on commencement of the lease, and the full purchase price will become payable on Catalyst's receipt of planning consent for the development.

3. See 2. above.
4. Whatever income has been "lost" by closing the Temple Cowley pool has, I understand, been more than compensated for by the increased income generated by the its replacement facility at Blackbird Leys.
5. The only circumstance in which the lease to Catalyst might be terminated (other than by the transfer to Catalyst of the freehold) is where they fail to obtain planning consent for the proposed development. Catalyst are under an obligation to secure the site, for health and safety reasons, which involved boarding up and potentially demolishing the building, thus the site cannot be "handed back" in the state it was in immediately prior to commencement of the lease.
6. See the response in the first paragraph above.

**The following questions were submitted in writing but the questioner did not attend to put this in person. Written responses are below each question.**

#### **6. Question from Ann Duncan– parishing the city - with written response**

Question to the Leader, Councillor Price

As part of the proposed transition to Unitary authorities in Oxfordshire, will the City Council support full parishing of the area currently covered by Oxford City Council, as contribution to local democracy and decentralisation?

#### **Written Response from Councillor Price**

This question is more than a little premature since there is as yet no timescale for a move to unitary authorities in Oxfordshire, nor any certainty that such a move will in fact take place.

#### **7. Question from Elise Benjamin– Carnival - with written response**

Question to the Board Member, Councillor Simm

Can the leader explain what went wrong with Carnival that led to the confusion over the £1 voluntary entrance fee and how similar confusion will be avoided in the future?

#### **Written Response from Councillor Simm**

Cowley Road Works, a social enterprise, are responsible for the organisation and management of Carnival. CRW decided this year to experiment with a voluntary £1 contribution from visitors to increase income and to provide a fund which could be used to support planning for future years' events. I have not heard any comments about the way that the charge was managed among the many comments praising the quality and range of activities at Carnival. CRW are currently undertaking their normal post event evaluation and the questioner may wish to contribute her comments to that evaluation process.

## **8. Question from Matthew Ledbury – local funding - with written response**

Question to the Leader, Councillor Price

Given the fact that the recent vote in Parliament to support an eye-wateringly costly renewal of the Trident nuclear missile system will put further pressure on funding for local government services and public services at a time when austerity cuts are biting deeply, what representations will members of this Council Chamber be making to their parliamentary parties on the consequences of this vote?

### **Written Response from Councillor Price**

I can assure the questioner that all three parties represented on this Council have been campaigning strongly against the impact of the austerity policies of the current government and will continue to do so both through the parliamentary processes and lobbying through the Local Government Association. Regrettably, the impact of Brexit on the national economy is likely to be even more significant than the cost of renewing Trident on the process of deficit reduction.

## **9. Question from Sietske Boeles, CPRE Oxfordshire – Green Belt development - with written response**

Question to the Board Member, Councillor Hollingsworth

CPRE Oxfordshire notes that:

- in 2014, there were just over 200,000 motor vehicles entering and leaving Cambridge per 12-hour day (7am to 7pm). This represents an increase of 5% compared with 2013. (Annual Traffic Monitoring Report 2014, Cambridgeshire County Council)
- House prices in Cambridge have risen at a faster rate than those in any other town and city in England and Wales since 2010... Cambridge's reputation as a tech hub has driven up the cost of property' (Guardian, 18 March 2016).

On this basis, do Councillors agree that the Cambridge example of sacrificing its Green Belt to development should not carry any weight in Oxford City's own decision-making?

### **Written Response from Councillor Hollingsworth**

No I do not agree, and indeed I draw the opposite conclusion. Cambridge, like Oxford, has suffered from many decades of planning policy which attempted to disperse housing and development across a wider area, with the result that tens of thousands of people end up reliant on car-based commuting to get between their jobs and their homes. In Cambridge that policy is starting to be reversed, with new developments on the edge of the city, but reversing decades of ill-conceived planning mistakes takes time.

Evidence from all over the world shows that the most successful cities, measured economically, environmentally and in terms of the happiness and well-being of their citizens, are those that are compact, co-ordinated and connected. For example Barcelona has a carbon footprint half that of Atlanta, a city of roughly the same population, because its carefully planned development and dense urban core means that homes and jobs are located close to one another, services are easily accessible by foot, bike or public transport, and populations are concentrated enough to support thriving local businesses.

Oxford is a successful city, and will continue to attract jobs and people; to pretend otherwise is to fail to learn the lesson of Canute more than 1000 years ago. The challenge we face is to accommodate those jobs and people in the best way, and in my view communities based on carefully planned sustainable urban extensions to the city of Oxford are far better than isolated dormitory developments scattered across the county and only accessible by car.