

MOTIONS ON NOTICE FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY 16TH JULY 2012

(1) **Council Estate Management – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart McCready, seconder Councillor Jean Fooks)**

Up until the start of the 2011/12 financial year, twelve estate managers provided a landlord presence that reached all Council housing in Oxford. The estate manager visited frequently and kept a constant pro-active eye out for problems and knew which department had the solutions. Tenants knew who their estate manager was and could depend on getting a reply when they asked their estate manager to visit, see what a given problem was, and provide advice, help and advocacy in identifying and dealing with the City departments that had the solutions.

For the past year we have had only five estate managers for the whole City, and the emphasis has been on tenants identifying and contacting for themselves the specialist team most likely to help with a given problem - and then they cannot be sure of dealing with the same person twice in a row. This has meant that tenants are faced with a more fragmented, and consequently less effective, landlord service. There is a sense on some estates that cases that were progressing when an estate manager was on the case have stalled and even very simple matters sometimes seem a bewildering challenge to get seen to.

The Council therefore asks the Executive to investigate restructuring the landlord function to ensure that every tenant has a single familiar officer to whom they can reliably turn for a home visit and advice when they need help or service from the Housing Department.

(2) **Failure of the Green New Deal – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Craig Simmons)**

This Council is concerned that the Government flagship policy, the so called 'Green Deal' to be launched in Oxford and other Cities in the Autumn, is already set to herald (by the Government's own figures) a massive decline in roof insulation and cavity wall insulations year on year.

By listening to the energy companies demands to remove some of their obligations, plus narrowing considerably the social criteria for subsidized insulation and most important setting the public loans at a commercial rate, as illustrated by the Secretary of State in his statement on the 11th of June, the impact of the Green New Deal will be totally counter productive. His own revised figures indicate a drop of roof insulation from 900,000 per year (2012) to 150,000 (2013) (-83%) plus a fall in the number of cavity wall insulations from 700,000 (2012) to 400,000 (-67%). This will mean that the UK will without doubt miss its future climate change targets.

Council asks the Chief Executive to make representations as follows:-

- (1) To bring to the attention of the Secretary of State that a primary objective of his office should be to reduce carbon emissions and to reduce energy usage and that to achieve that a loft insulation programme and cavity wall schemes are the most cost effective ways to reduce heating bills and reduce costs to consumers;
- (2) To advise the Secretary of State that a Government prediction of a dramatic decline in roof insulation and cavity wall schemes to 150,000 and 400,000 respectively is a fraction of the target set in 2009 of 2.1 million homes with roof insulation each year and 1.4million cavity wall schemes and unless these targets are met the UK will without doubt miss its own targets for carbon emissions;
- (3) To call on the Government not to restrict loan subsidies to only the very poorest pockets in a limited number of communities and not to rely on market forces via commercial loans to deliver the necessary increases in loft insulation and cavity wall insulation that are needed but to expand the social criteria so that large areas of Oxford City may benefit;
- (4) To inform the Secretary of State that with an expanded social criteria to include low income families, all pensioners, those with a disability or on income support and other vulnerable groups the primary objective of maintaining the insulation programme can be achieved.

(3) **Local Authority Co-operative Network – (Proposer – Councillor Elise Benjamin, seconder Councillor David Williams)**

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

Council believes that this would assist the Council in developing the Co-operative ideal with possible trader's co-operative such as the Covered Market, co-operative housing trusts, small co-operative productive enterprises and many more.

(4) **Passenger right to privacy – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Craig Simmons)**

Given the intrusion into privacy and the abuse of civil liberties this Council will oppose the introduction of recording (secret or explicit)

of passenger conversations in public transport vehicles including buses, taxi cabs and licensed private hire vehicles. To that end Council resolves as follows:-

- (1) The concept of a passenger right to privacy in the passenger space will be incorporated into Oxford licensing conditions for taxi and private hire vehicles.
- (2) Oxfordshire County Council will be approached to seek a joint policy endorsing the same passenger rights to privacy in the passenger space concept to be a condition of all operators using bus routes in Oxfordshire.
- (3) The views of the Council are brought to the attention of the Stagecoach Company and a request made that they limit their present pilot project of recording passenger conversations on the Oxford to London Oxford Tube service to driver/passenger conversations whilst driving and that there is no recording in the passenger seating space.

(5) Support for gay marriage and civic rights partnerships – (Proposer – Councillor Criag Simmons, seconder Councillor Sam Hollick)

This Council places on record its support not only for the right of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual individuals to have the right to marry but also for heterosexuals to have a civil partnership if that is their preferred option. The Council believes that it is the right of all Oxford residents and those beyond the City to marry or enter civil partnerships in the manner they desire, whatever their sexuality.

The Chief Executive to submit this stance by the Council to the relevant Secretary of State as a part of the Governments recent consultation leading up to the promised primary legislation on the issue.

(6) Taxi Licenses City Quotas – (Proposer – Councillor Criag Simmons, seconder Councillor Dick Wolff)

This Council is conscious of the present review of taxi licensing laws being carried out by the Law Commission and would place on record its desire for local authorities to retain the power to establish a restricted quota of taxi licenses in Oxford City. The Council takes this stance in the belief that limiting the number of licenses will assist the City in enforcing regulations on the taxi and private hire operators that may be laid down from time to time.

The Chief Executive is instructed to forward a clear statement to that effect to the Secretary of the Law Commission illustrating the advantages that accrue to local authorities from not adopting a free market unrestricted unregulated system.

(7) **Localising Democracy – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Craig Simmons)**

The present Area Forum structure is not seen as a meaningful devolution of power and responsibility in tune with the present Localism Act.

Abolition of Area Committees diminished local participation in planning decisions and engagement of local voluntary organisations and citizens in real local grass roots democracy.

The replacement Area Forum structure introduced in 2011 is not seen as a meaningful devolution of power in tune with the present Localism Act, having no defined responsibilities or budget.

Consequently there is a need to reconsider devolved decision making in Oxford with a new approach that focuses on localising democracy to reflect the diversity of the City and its many communities.

In Blackbird Leys, Littlemore, Old Marston, and Risinghurst and Sandhills, the Parish Councils have statutory powers regarding planning and services, and in some other areas local communities and neighbourhoods are seeking a greater say in local planning through neighbourhood and community forums.

To ensure consistency and to advance fairness and democracy across the city, the Chief Executive is tasked to conduct a Community Governance Review, in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) and the more recent Localism Act (2011) with a view to establishing new local elected councils (which may be called: Parish Councils, Community Councils, Neighbourhood Councils or Village Councils), to cover all areas of the City of Oxford.

In addition to these local councils' powers of precept, the City will provide additional funding to support real devolved decision making in a defined range of services. The new local councils would thus be publicly elected bodies with clearly identified powers, responsibilities and budgets.

The Chief Executive to produce a report to Council in the late autumn after a period of consultation illustrating the defined communities the local councils would serve, the services that could be devolved to the new local councils, and the funding mechanism that could be deployed to ensure their effectiveness.

(8) **Institutional investment in Private Rented Housing – (Proposer – Councillor Ed Turner)**

Council notes the review commissioned by Government into institutional investment into Private Rented Housing, chaired by Sir Adrian Montague, of 3i.

Council further notes, with concern, proposals from the British Property Federation to this review, and associated media reports suggesting that the review will endorse these, which would allow developers freely to substitute institutionally-financed private rented housing for affordable housing provided through the planning process.

Council believes that there is a major shortage of genuinely affordable housing in Oxford. Council endorses the existing approach of requiring social rented housing through the planning system, and expresses strong concern that the "affordable rent" model promoted by the Tory-Lib Dem government is not affordable in Oxford.

Council in particular resolves to resist any attempt to substitute private rented housing, at full rent, for affordable housing, as a result of the Montague Review.

(9) Building Regulations – (Proposer – Councillor Mike Gotch, seconder Councillor Graham Jones)

Council notes that Building Regulations are due to be radically tightened in 2013 and 2016 – when new dwellings must be constructed and run to have a carbon neutral footprint .

Council further notes the ambition to lead the country in reducing carbon emissions, and therefore asks the Executive:-

- to adopt a strategy of requesting private and public sector planning and building regulations' applicants to begin to adopt those standards now, rather than delay that which will soon become compulsory, and,
- as an exemplar , to ensure that all of new Barton West is in full conformity with the 2016 standards ,including a combined Heat and Power unit to serve all new dwellings , but also existing Barton dwellings following a feasibility study to establish viability.

(10) Potential impact of proposed developments - (Proposer Councillor Dick Wolff)

Notwithstanding the general development permissions relating to particular sites in planning policies, this Council is concerned to consider in greater detail the potential impact of proposed developments which are subject to planning approval on the :-

- (a) sustainability,
- (b) vitality,
- (c) diversity and
- (d) ongoing development of local economies (both city-wide and at neighbourhood level).

Specific considerations include:-

- (i) the financial viability of local businesses, particularly independents;
- (ii) the number of people in paid employment in a neighbourhood;
- (iii) the importance of maintaining economic diversity in neighbourhoods as a whole, in addition to concern about individual businesses.

Although the great majority of planning applications will not have significant implications for local economic sustainability the Council deems it appropriate that where it is clear that a proposed development is worthy of concern with regard to the considerations described above that an appropriate Local Economic Impact Assessment is made by Council officers and presented as an integral part of the officers' report when a planning application is considered, together with recommended conditions and mitigation measures where potential negative impacts are identified.

A Local Economic Impact Assessment will only be conducted when there is a clear potential impact on an area as a whole.