

## 10. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

***NOTE: Questions and answers to them cannot, by the Constitution, take longer than 3 minutes.***

**(1) Question to the Board Member, City Development  
(Councillor Colin Cook) from Adrian Arbib**

Roger Dudman Way - Photomontages

Can you please clarify which photomontages in relation to the controversial Roger Dudman Way development (11/02881/FUL) were first available on the City Council website? The Briefing note by Michael Crofton Briggs (April 2013) refers to photo montages dated November 21 2011. However there are no photo montages up on the Council website for that date but only ones dated 21 December 2011 and referred to as additional information.

Can you confirm that these 21 December 2011 photo montages were uploaded on the Council's website at the time of consultation and determination of the planning application?

**Response:** To be given orally at the meeting

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

Roger Dudman Way – Officer advice

Can Oxford City Council clarify if the West Area Planning Committee acted ultra vires when it instructed the Head of City Development to negotiate with Oxford University to ameliorate the height and mass of the Roger Dudman Way Development? If WAPC has acted ultra vires, then who in the City Council has the executive power to take this forward?

**Response:** Council asked the Head of City Development (HoCD) to bring forward as soon as possible in the New Year, a report to WAPC, setting out any general lessons that need to be learned from the handling of this application and an assessment of the scope for further measures that are legally possible and that would contribute in the long and the short term to mitigate the impact on the views looking south from Port Meadow.

The HoCD submitted a report to the 7 February 2013 meeting of WAPC. The meeting resolved to

- (1) instruct the HoCD to negotiate with the University of Oxford in order to ameliorate the size and impact of the development

- (2) instruct the HoCD to report back to on the progress of those negotiations (by the April meeting at the latest;
- (3) establish a working party to recommend to the Council any changes to policies or procedure which the process of handling and determination of the application (including the pre-application and consultation stages) might suggest would be desirable

(1) and (2) are intrinsic to assessing the scope for further measures as referred to in the resolution of Council

(3) is intrinsic to establishing general lessons to be learned as referred to in the resolution of Council

Officers are therefore content that WAPC did not exceed the scope of its authority

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

Roger Dudman Way design specifications

What is the size of the Roger Dudman Way development (11/02881/FUL)

- in m2 of floor space
- in m2 as its external building footprint
- in elevation (metres above sea level) of each of the 8 buildings
- of overall height of each of the buildings from external ground level to apex of roof (I understand there will be two heights, one for the 2 buildings lower in height and one for the other 6 buildings)

**Response:** To be given orally at the meeting.

**(4) Question to the Board Member, Leisure Services (Councillor Van Coulter) from Nigel Gibson**

Oxford Spires Academy Gym - Funding

Council recently announced their subsidy of £200,000 to Oxford Spires Academy for a gym, revealed by Cllr Coulter in a newspaper article as a replacement for Temple Cowley Pools, and without any previous notice to the public. What consultation has the Council carried out to establish that this part-time facility is what the public inside the ring road really want as a replacement, and is Cllr Coulter aware that you can't swim in a gym?

**Response:** I am aware that you cannot swim in a gym. But I am also aware you cannot dive in a pool that's not fit for purpose - as has been the case for the dive pool at Temple Cowley Pools since 2002.

It's consideration of the options reviewed in September 2010, a commitment was made by the City Council's Executive Board to provide alternative leisure facilities within the Cowley locality as a result of the community consultations carried out by the City Council.

**(5) Question to the Board Member, Leisure Services  
(Councillor Van Coulter) from Jane Alexander**

Temple Cowley Pools running costs

In an interview with BBC Radio Oxford last Wednesday morning, Councillor Coulter admitted that the annual running costs of Temple Cowley Pools is not over half a million pounds as the Council has maintained previously, but about one hundred thousand pounds. He then went on to say that the running costs of the proposed new pool in Blackbird Leys would be "much lower". Can the councillor please explain this statement, given that the Council has previously published that the annual payment to Fusion for the proposed new pool will be in the region of £130,000-150,000?

**Response:** In my comments to the BBC, I stated that costs for maintenance and repairs at The Temple Cowley facility averaged over £100,000 for each of the past five years.

There are sets of additional expenses aside from maintenance and repair costs and I remain confident that the Council is fair in asserting that Temple Cowley Pools and Gym has cost the council tax payer's of Oxford half a million pounds a year to run.

**(6) Question to the Board Member, Finance and Efficiency  
(Councillor Ed Turner) from Sietske Boeles**

Student Council Tax exemptions

How many properties are currently exempt from paying Council Tax due to being occupied by students. Can you please give a breakdown of N and M categories? How does these figures for the N properties compare to the previous year for the same period?

**Response:** To be given orally at the meeting.

(7) **Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Ruth Fox**

Advertisements

Many of the buses in Oxford carry advertisements for 'Choose Life', a campaign run by the organisation Christian Concern. The aim of this campaign, according to their website, is to 'make abortion history'. 'Choose Life' advertises itself as a pregnancy advisory service: they ask 'Pregnant? Worried? Don't know what to do?' The response below: 'We can help. Choose life'.

Women who are unsure whether to continue a pregnancy should be offered impartial, medically sound advice on the options available to them. The 'choose life' campaign will, on the contrary, be offering advice to women with the aim of fulfilling its ambition to 'make abortion history'. Women will almost certainly be discouraged from seeking an abortion, and very likely misled about what it will involve. A campaign such as 'choose life' does not have the best interests of women at heart; rather, it is an attempt to restrict women's freedom of choice, by convincing them to continue with a pregnancy that they may not want or which may have negative consequences for their physical and mental wellbeing.

My question to the council is: how can we allow the display of such adverts in a city which, I would like to think, places value on women's freedom of choice and right to determine the course of their own lives? I would like to request that the council take whatever action it can to ensure these advertisements are removed from the buses.

**Response:** The Council is responsible for advertisement control under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. An advertisement displayed on a (normally moving) vehicle is however exempted from the Council's control. Even where adverts are subject to the Council's control, the purposes for which advertisement control can be exercised are prescribed. The Council can act only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Where advertisement consents are granted the Council is prohibited from imposing any limitation or condition relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed. The Council is not able to use advertisement control to exercise a censorship function. The Advertising Standards Authority may be able to assist where the content of an advertisement is considered to be problematic.