

Last time I addressed Council I spoke about how you faced a decision; continuing to be guilty of maladministration, or taking the opportunity, in the light of new information, to revisit your decision to spend over £13m on building a 25m swimming pool in a place where there is no evidence of demand, while at the same time closing the existing swimming pool at Blackbird Leys and the Temple Cowley Pools & Gym Leisure Centre when they could be refurbished and improved for £3m.

The maladministration continues, as you have decided to start building the swimming pool in Blackbird Leys. Your action has crystallised for the Blackbird Leys community the huge adverse impact this building will have; how much of the little green space they have left it will eat up; how it will loom over the residents close to it in Pegasus Road; and how much more traffic will be generated if people are forced down 20mph residential roads to meet the forecast footfall.

And I have continued, as promised, to move towards an application for a Judicial Review. The pre-action protocol has been attempted; your legal department have responded, but only partially, and with threats about how much money it will cost me. As usual, with all the legal defences I've seen from this council over the last four years, there is no attempt to provide a substantive defence of the actual issue, or to engage in a dialogue to resolve matters. Instead, requests for information are ignored and I'm told in no uncertain terms that if I, a mere member of the public, dare to challenge the mighty City Council, I will be pursued for all the money I have. We should all be aware that it is the public that funds this organisation, which is after all said and done only a middle ranking district council, and that you exist not for your own self-aggrandisement, but to deliver services that the people of Oxford want and need, where they want and need them.

And with Temple Cowley Pools, the people have made it very clear to you over the past four years that they want their services kept open, and the Campaign has demonstrated time and again that the evidence you put forward to support your case for closure does not stand up to even the most basic level of scrutiny.

So, this lack of engagement does not prevent an application for Judicial Review from proceeding. But recently even more new information has come to light that adds even more weight to the need for you to review your decision to close Temple Cowley Pools. Not only that; this information compromises your overall strategy on housing and finance, negating your Corporate Plan and all the policy documents that flow from it.

The fundamental building block of the Council strategy, something that dare not be questioned, and is repeated all the time, is that we as a city are in desperate need of more housing. It's simply accepted that we don't have enough. This is what is driving all the housing development across the city, from infill in any available space (well in East Oxford at any rate), through closure of Temple Cowley Pools to make way for housing on that site and into the green field behind St Christopher's School, through to the removal of all green space up to the City boundary that is the Barton West development.

This new information I have is not made up, but comes from the Council; firstly leaked unintentionally in a public meeting, but then clarified in an answer to a public question at the last City Executive Board Meeting.

The key number driving the housing strategy is the number of households on the Housing Register, what used to be known, and still thought of by many people, as a waiting list. Page 17 of the Corporate Strategy declares boldly that there are over 6,000 households on the Housing Register, and as a result the Council's number one declared housing priority is to build new homes. As many as possible. And regardless of the related need for additional services such as education, health and transport.

There is a general assumption that everyone on the Housing Register has an assessed and recognised need for accommodation. However, what has recently been revealed is that anyone on the lowest Band, Band 5, is not assessed as being in need, and indeed will never get a home through this process, however long they stay on there.

Two questions occurred to me, based on my experience with the way the Council manipulates information to its own ends. Firstly, how accurate is that figure of 6,000 driving the housing policy? And then, how many of that number is in Band 5 – because we will then have an insight into the real assessed need.

So, the numbers. At the start of September there were 4,789 households on the Housing Register, not the 6,000 driving your strategy at the moment. And in Band 5? I was, frankly, astonished at this number. 2,926 households are in Band 5, and will never be allocated a home regardless of how long they are on the Housing Register.

And it means that instead of 6,000 households, you should be using 1,863 households; this is less than a third of the number you have used to develop your housing strategy, and launch on this frenzy of new development. I'm not suggesting that there is no need for housing at all, but the reality of these numbers calls into question and surely invalidates your Housing Strategy, all the related planning policies and also the Corporate Plan itself.

And if these numbers had been available when you considered closing Temple Cowley Pools, and decided building houses was a better option, perhaps you would have made a different decision. Full, real, accurate information was not made available to you when you made your decision; not only on this housing issue, but also on refurbishment costs, what the real state of the Temple Cowley Pools building actually was, and comparative building costs for new swimming pools that show just how expensive the new pool at Blackbird Leys. None of this information was available to councillors in July 2011 when you decided to close Temple Cowley Pools – it is available now, and you should take this opportunity to fulfil your legal obligation to review your decision.