

MOTIONS ON NOTICE – Liberal Democrat, Green, Labour

(1) **Control of residential lettings boards in the City – (Proposed by Councillor Ruth Wilkinson, seconded by Councillor Steve Goddard)**

Liberal Democrat Group Member - Motion on Notice

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

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

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

Council asks the City Executive Board:

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

(2) **Future of the Temple Cowley Pool site – (Proposed by Councillor Dick Wolff, seconded by Councillor Sam Hollick)**

Green Group Member – Motion on Notice

In a letter published in the Oxford Mail on June 16th last, Cllr Price said:

'It is . . . untrue to assert that the (Temple Cowley) pool site will be ‘turned into a block of flats for Brookes students’. The site is out to tender, and is registered as a Community Asset. We are expecting a proposal from the campaign group for a combined pool and housing development. Other developers will be

offering different combinations of housing and leisure/ community uses, but Brookes will not be among them.'

Firstly, Council endorses Core Strategy para 21:

'Planning permission will only be granted for development resulting in the loss of existing sports and leisure facilities . . . if no deficiency is created in the area. Alternative facilities should be provided . . . in areas that have an identified shortage.'

Noting that the Cowley Community Centre is being replaced with a much smaller community room as part of a housing development, other leisure facilities (e.g. the Morris Motors Club, the Parish Halls on Between Towns Road) have been lost, and the Temple Cowley Pools & Leisure complex is being closed, Council 'identifies' a consequent clear 'shortage' of 'sports and leisure' facilities in Cowley/Temple Cowley.

Council therefore welcomes the Leader's commitment, in line with CS21, and agrees to secure continuing public leisure facilities on the Temple Cowley site, regardless of whether the Temple Cowley Pools campaigners succeed in producing a bid within the time available, and - recognising that, in the Council's Sites & Housing Development Plan Document, community use is described as "unlikely to be a viable use for the landowner" - agrees to provide capital funding for the leisure component.

Secondly,

(a) In line with the principles of 'transparency and clarity' in the Council's proposed 'Community Engagement Strategy', which states

'The boundaries of the decision (being consulted upon) must be defined — it should be clear which aspects are being consulted upon, and where decisions have already been made. To avoid creating unrealistic expectations, stakeholders and citizens must be told what they can or cannot influence by responding to engagement, and what the next steps will be.'

(b) in view of the statement in the Leader's letter that the development of the site has already gone out to tender,

(c) recognising (under the community engagement principle of 'proportionality') the potential impact of the development particularly on the Temple Cowley area

(d) recognising that the Sites & Housing Development Plan document allocates the site only for 'residential' development, but that since the adoption of that plan the Pools & Leisure complex have been registered as a Community Asset

(e) acknowledging that the tender document itself is not commercially sensitive

Council commits to:

- (1) making this tender document public and,
- (2) fully engaging with local residents, using the results as the key determinant in assessing tenders from developers.

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

Labour Group Member – Motion on Notice

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

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

(4) Developing an ethical investment policy – (Proposed by Councillor Craig Simmons, seconded by Councillor Ruthi Brandt)

Green Group Member – Motion on Notice

At its 24th March 2014 meeting, the Scrutiny Finance Panel considered revising the content of the City Council's current Treasury Management Strategy having previously determined that it did not include a statement on ethical investment.

The Finance Panel have stated that they would like to work towards making recommendations on this as soon as possible. They proposed the following draft Ethical Investment Statement:

The Council will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the Council's mission and values. This would include, inter alia, avoiding investment in institutions with material links to:

- *human rights abuse (e.g. child labour, political oppression)*

- *environmentally harmful activities (e.g. pollution, destruction of habitat, fossil fuel extraction, refinement companies)*
- *socially harmful activities (e.g. tobacco, gambling)*

With respect to its indirect investments, the Council will work with a ratings agency to develop a workable ethical policy aligned with the above mission and values.

Council welcomes this work by the Finance Panel and asks the City Executive Board to instruct officers to undertake the necessary research, in collaboration with Finance Panel, to develop a workable Ethical Investment Statement along the lines set out in the draft proposed above.

Council notes that this draft includes a recognition of the need to divest from companies involved in the extraction and refinement of fossil fuels

(5) Privatisation of the Probation Service – (Proposed by Councillor John Tanner)

Labour Group Member – Motion on Notice

Oxford City Council considers the planned privatisation of 70% of the Probation Service as reckless, dangerous and costly. It is likely to increase re-offending in Oxford, could compromise the safety of local residents and ignores the expertise of the local probation service.

Coming hard on the heels of the savage cuts in Legal Aid this attack on the Probation Service underlines the Coalition's lack of interest in tackling crime. We call on the Government to withdraw its proposals and negotiate with the National Association of Probation officers for a sensible way forward.