

COUNCIL

Monday 29 September 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Abbasi (Lord Mayor), Humberstone (Sheriff), Simmons (Deputy Lord Mayor), Altaf-Khan, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Fooks, Fry, Gotch, Haines, Henwood, Hollick, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Sanders, Seamons, Sinclair, Tanner, Turner, Upton, Van Nooijen, Wolff, Brandt, Gant, Goddard, Simm, Tarver, Thomas and Wade.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Lord Mayor welcomed Councillors Henwood, Hollingsworth and Munkonge to their first meeting of full council since their election.

Apologies were received from Councillors Farida Anwar, Elise Benjamin, Roy Darke, Tom Hayes, and Ruth Wilkinson.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

40. MINUTES

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 14th July 2014 as a true and correct record.

41. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

Council had before it nominations for vacant places allocated to the Labour Group on West Area Planning, Scrutiny, and Licensing & Gambling Acts Committees.

Council agreed to appoint:

- Councillor Alex Holingsworth to West Area Planning Committee;
- Councillor David Henwood to Scrutiny Committee; and
- Councillor Chewe Munkonge to Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee.

42. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Abbasi, announced:

- Prince William had visited the city to open the University of Oxford's China centre and Princess Anne had attended the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene's conference in the town hall;
- the annual St Giles Fair had taken place;

- he had attended a reception for London Welsh Rugby Club and a reception at the Ashmolean museum.

He notified Council of the resignation of Councillor Val Smith and paid tribute to her as the representative of Blackbird Leys for 27 years and her time as Lord Mayor.

Councillor Bob Price (Leader of the Council), Councillor Jean Fooks, and Councillor Craig Simmons paid tribute to Councillor Val Smith and her service to the city and its residents as a parish, district and county councillor and as officer holder over many years. They sent their good wishes to her and her family.

The Sherriff, Councillor announced he had attended the AGM in Canterbury.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bob Price, announced:

- congratulations to the Motor Transport team who won the Best Service Team in the Transport & Fleet category and the Youth Ambition Team who won the Best Service Team for the Sports, Leisure & Culture category at the recent public service excellence awards;
- an opportunity to invest in the low carbon hub's community share offer to finance renewable energy projects;
- he hoped the council could support World Cancer Day on 4th February 2015 by supporting local charities.

43. PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING

Under Council procedure rule 11.11, Sarah Lasenby submitted a written question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) but did not attend to ask it.

Question on petition (minute 52 refers)

Will Bob Price the Leader of the Council ask the Lord Mayor to intervene if any of the Councillors who speak in favour of the motion for debate [Save Temple Cowley Pools] then vote against that motion?

This has happened in the past and seems most undemocratic. It also appears as if Councillors are not interested in the views of these very large numbers of the public who want to keep the leisure centre. These specially include those from Rose Hill, Wood Farm and Cowley who will lose out if the leisure complex is not saved.

The voters are relying on fair and transparent processes and expect them to be used. What we have seen is voting by Councillors from the Groups in line with pre-agreed decisions rather than considering the facts and the issues that the public want debated and then voting in the way indicated by those facts.

Written Response

The Lord Mayor has no constitutional power to direct the way that members vote on these issues. Such a restriction would be ultra vires.

44. DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2014-17

Council had before it the report of the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to the City Executive Board on 3rd July 2014 and the relevant extract of the minutes of that meetings. This asked Council to adopt the draft Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014–17 (which replaces the Consultation Strategy 2010–13) as part of the Policy Framework.

Councillor Simm moved the report.

Council agreed to adopt the Community Engagement Policy Statement 2014-17 as part of the council's Policy Framework.

45. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2014/15

Council had before it the report of the Head of Finance and the Head of Business Improvement & Technology to the City Executive Board on 10th September 2014 and an extract from the minutes of that meeting. This detailed the Council's finances, risk and performance as at the end of Quarter 1, 30th June 2014 and made two recommendations to Council.

Councillor Turner moved the report.

Council agreed to:

1. approve a £160,000 capital investment in a Heavy Goods Vehicle Testing Facility; and
2. bring forward a £2 million capital investment in Homelessness Property acquisitions from 2015/16 to 2014/15 with the balance of the £10 million budget being profiled £2 million each year over four years from 2015/16.

46. ROSE HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Council had before it the joint report of the Head of Leisure, Parks & Communities and the Service Manager, Regeneration and Major Projects to the City Executive Board meeting on 24th September, and the minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Turner moved the report.

Councillor Thomas moved an amendment to add a third point "If/when it becomes apparent that the contingency funds are not needed, the matter of redirecting these towards the purchase of the Gladiator Club is considered by the City Executive Board". This was lost on being put to the vote.

Council therefore considered the unamended recommendation in the report.

Council agreed to allocate a revised capital budget of £4,764,000 for the construction of the Rose Hill Community Centre.

47. HONORARY RECORDER - APPOINTMENT

Council had before it the report of the Head of Law and Governance asking Council to appoint the Honorary Recorder of Oxford.

Councillor Price moved the report.

Council agreed to:

1. appoint His Honour Judge Ian Pringle QC to the post of Honorary Recorder of Oxford for as long as he holds the position of resident Judge at the Crown Court; and
2. thank His Honour Judge Gordon Risius CB who stands down from his appointment as Resident Judge on 3rd October 2014.

48. COVENANT OF MAYORS

Council had before it the report of the Head of Environmental Development requesting Council to support the Covenant of Mayors. This is the mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in their municipality.

Councillor Tanner moved the report.

Council agreed to support the Covenant of Mayors and authorised the Lord Mayor to sign the Covenant adhesion form.

49. CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

Council had before it minutes of the City Executive Board from:

- (a) 10th September 2014
- (b) 24th September 2014.

City Executive Board Minute 49 - Councillor Fooks said she was pleased to note the meetings of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and the minutes and agendas were open to the public, and that councillors should keep informed of the work of the Board.

In response Councillor Price said he agreed and that he would report the work of the Growth Board to future meetings of Council.

50. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

1. To the Board member for Sports, Events and Parks (Councillor Mark Lygo) from Councillor Jean Fooks: Cutteslowe Park trees

Volunteers, many of them children, have planted hundreds of trees in Cutteslowe Park and in other parks in the city. It is heartrending to see that many have been destroyed when nearby paths are mown; this has happened more than once. What steps are you taking to prevent this destruction? And what replacement trees are being planted to make up for those lost in this way?

Written response

Having received this question the parks operations manager has undertaken an audit of Cutteslowe Park. None of the planted trees within Cutteslowe Park have been cut down and the staff are aware of the location of the trees. Pathways are cut infrequently due to the heavy footfall.

Supplementary question

Could the Board member please investigate to ensure that it was indeed the case that no trees had been lost?

Response

This would be confirmed with Cutteslowe parks staff when the portfolio holder met with them later in the week.

2. To the Board member for Sports, Events and Parks (Councillor Mark Lygo) from Councillor Jean Fooks: Cutteslowe Park rangers

There have been several incidents in Cutteslowe Park which might have been prevented if the park rangers had been on site. What are you doing to ensure that the rangers are able to spend more time in the park, not just in the office?

Written response

The team covers 266 hectares of parkland and also support the countryside rangers to manage 387 hectares of countryside. We have a seven day patrol service and undertake a range of tasks that help to make Oxford's green spaces vibrant, active and safe.

The team plan and change their patrols based on feedback from stakeholders and the public.

With the parks team being based Cutteslowe the park has by far the highest level of presence from the parks team and we are not aware of an increase in incidents at Cutteslowe park.

As such we are not planning to increase the patrols at Cutteslowe park. If Councillor Fooks has any feedback on incidents then the team are always very keen to receive this as soon as possible so we can take the appropriate action.

Supplementary question

Why were park staff not aware of the pollution in the pond and other damage?

Response

Councillor Lygo agreed to look into Councillor Fooks' concerns.

3. To the Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Sam Hollick: Cuts to homelessness services

Will the Leader join me in condemning the planned cuts to homelessness services recently consulted on by the County Council? What has been the City's response to this consultation?

Written response

Yes, the City Council are deeply concerned about the impact of the proposed cuts to Housing related support budgets by the County Council. Detailed below is the City Council's detailed response to the consultation.

'Oxford City Council strongly opposes the scale of cuts this this area of service. It considers that this funding stream is essential in providing quality services to assist some of the most vulnerable members of our community, at a time when they need help most, and to help them move towards independent living. Many clients, in the adult homeless pathway in particular, have very high and complex needs that without suitable support, in a supported accommodation environment, will fail to achieve this goal. Failing to address the needs of the various client groups impacted by this change, has the potential to destroy lives. Furthermore, the impact of not making sufficient, responsive and timely interventions to achieve effective outcomes, will significantly add to the pressure on other services, statutory and non-statutory, including adult social care, homelessness, physical and mental health services, hospital admissions, police, community safety, courts, and food banks, to name but a few.

Whilst acknowledging that Oxfordshire County Council is under increasing financial pressure from Central Government, and needs to make savings and efficiencies, Oxford City Council considers that making a significant cut to services that impact on these most vulnerable people is inappropriate, and that cuts should be directed elsewhere. With an effective 38% cut to this funding stream, there are insufficient funds to be confident of ensuring the continued delivery of effective services. It should be noted that Oxford City Council is proposing to maintain its overall budget for homeless services in full because it regards them as a high priority, especially if shielding the most vulnerable is to have any real meaning. We very much regret that the County Council has not taken the same approach.

As a partner organisation in the commissioning of these services, Oxford City Council agrees that the broad principles and outcomes, as proposed are correct. We appreciate the additional funding contributions proposed from Public Health funds, and feel that these do acknowledge the broader impact, and the social investment outcomes that in these services achieve.

The Council feels that the consultation proposals, as they stand at present, represent a missed opportunity for more effective joint commissioning of these services, between all Oxfordshire Councils and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, with funding contributions from these organisations used to commission agreed joint outcomes, and we would welcome further consideration being given to this. Specifically, we are keen to offer a contribution at the same level as is currently provided to commission hostel services in Oxford City, subject to an appropriate local connection policy being available (as we cannot use our funds to support clients from outside Oxford), and to jointly commission this service. We would encourage the Clinical Commissioning Group to make a similar commitment and to be similarly involved.

In terms of the detail of the proposals, Oxford City Council would make the following comments:

- While we appreciate that there is no reduction in bed spaces to the adult homeless hostel provision in the City, we are concerned at the management

implications of unsupported beds in hostels. This concern is heightened by the severe reductions proposed to floating support.

- We note that more support and accommodation is proposed in the neighbouring districts to Oxford, and acknowledge that a more dispersed model may reduce the draw of some vulnerable clients into Oxford City for services.
- We support the view that the drug treatment services will instead be commissioned under public health.
- We acknowledge that a strategic review of the domestic abuse services, including the helpline and outreach services, is to take place, and believe this is a better proposal than simply to reduce the service. We would want to ensure that refuge bed places are maintained at current levels. If the review shows that savings cannot be achieved in this area without harming victims of domestic abuse, we would encourage the County Council to reinstate funding to existing levels.
- We will work with fellow commissioners and providers to ensure that effective and high quality services can be maintained at the best value, and wish to ensure that support rates are set to ensure that quality staff can be recruited and retained to deliver these. Oxford City Council pays a living wage and would wish to see such a commitment included for these services.
- We understand that the 31% cut to floating support services will be implemented over two years rather than one, with a review after the first year to assess impacts and to draw lessons from any new models of delivering support, before further cuts are made. However, Oxford City Council remains gravely concerned, at the present time, that this level of cut will require a significant drop to the number of clients supported in their own homes, which risks higher numbers of people being evicted or falling out of accommodation, and increasing the demand on other services. Furthermore, the Council is concerned to ensure that additional service demands for floating support can be met, for example, should some accommodation-based support be reduced.

Oxford City Council would also welcome a further review of the Social Impact Assessment of this proposal, as it assesses the impacts to be greater than those presently stated. Children are, for example, another protected group impacted, in the areas of domestic abuse and floating support, in particular.

These proposals are being implemented late in the day, and they would require a significant transition period, the timescale for which is not presently clear.

We would strongly encourage County Council members to reconsider their scale, and in doing so act decisively to protect the most vulnerable in our community.'

Supplementary

Councillor Hollick thanked Councillor Seamons for his response and hoped the cross-party work would continue.

4. To the Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Craig Simmons: Empty homes

According to Government statistics, there are over 1,000 empty homes in Oxford City. What action is the City Council taking, and what more could it do, to put these homes back into use?

Written response tabled at the meeting:

The empty homes figures over the period of the last 5 years speak for themselves. The number of long term empty homes has over the last 5 years reduced by over 65% to the current figures of 251. Compared to Oxfordshire, in 2011/12 the number of empty homes as a proportion of the total stock was 2.35%. Oxford empty homes in 2011/12 were 2.19%. The England average was 3.06%. Compared to this now, the City Council have almost half the number of empty homes as a proportion of their total stock as the England average.

		Apr 2009	Feb 2013	Sep 2014
Second Homes		1088	875	976
Long Term Empties (>6 months)		717	440	251
Short Term Empty (<6mths)		915	710	622
Total Empty Homes		1632	1129	873
(b plus c plus d)				
No. of properties City Wide		57,638	59,123	59,379
Total Empties as % of total properties		2.83%	1.91%	1.47%
NDR EMPTY PROPERTIES	commercial properties	319		318

The Council continually monitors empty properties and this is reflected in the Empty Property Strategy 2013-18. If a property is considered to be long term empty the owners are written to and made aware that the Council are committed to encouraging them to bring them back into use. The Council has been very active in dealing with issues relating to empty dwellings, including serving nuisance notices, empty dwelling management orders (EDMO) and culminating in a list being compiled identifying dwellings suitable for compulsory purchase orders. Previously the Council had 3 EDMO's confirmed at a residential tribunal however all properties were brought back into use by the owner before being taken over by the Council. Last October CEB endorsed action being taken with regard to the CPO of a long term empty dwelling.

In addition to the above the empty property officer sends out a yearly mailshot to owners (listed by Council Tax) asking them to clarify occupancy status of their property. Those properties identified as occupied are listed and the Council Tax database is then updated. This is reflected in the fall in the number of empty dwellings from August to September as shown above.

For every empty dwelling brought back into use the Council receives an additional payment which matches that of the yearly Council tax value of the property (provided this is not countered by additional empty dwellings for the same year). This additional sum continues to be paid for each property for 6

years. In response to this year's mailshot (24.09.14), 60 properties have been identified as being occupied.

The potential income from this exercise if you take an average council tax band £1658 is $£1658 \times 60 = £99,480$.

Over a 6 year period $£99,480 \times 6 = £596,880$

The introduction of a premium charge is likely to have brought about the best response to this mailshot type to date. It should be noted Properties identified as occupied by this means do not count towards the Council's Empty Property performance indicator (usually around 12).

There is a lot of work happening in the background at the Council to ensure that empty homes are identified and tackled using the most appropriate powers available to the Council.

5. To the Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration (Councillor Scott Seamons) from Councillor Sam Hollick: OXPAT charity box

In light of the recent rise in rough sleeping, why has the Oxford Poverty Action Trust collection box been removed from the Town Hall reception?

Written response

The Oxford Poverty Action Trust was removed around 2 years ago. The Council have contacted OXPAT to see if they wish to relocate the box back at the Town Hall which we would be happy to accommodate. The OXPAT Secretary appreciated our contact and will follow it up with the Chair to check if they wish to do this, and respond in due course. The council is certainly aware of the gravity of the position with regards to rough sleeping and homelessness. For some months a collection box for the Oxford Homeless Medical Fund has been placed at the town hall reception. The Oxford Homeless Medical Fund supports a range of organisations working with homeless individuals, its main beneficiary being the Luther Street Medical Centre.

6. To the Board member for Crime and Community Response (Councillor Dee Sinclair) from Councillor Craig Simmons: Late night levy

Given that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Anthony Stansfeld, has made it clear that those local authorities in the Thames Valley that decide to introduce a 'late night levy' will be able to retain the entire sum – rather than hand over a portion to the Police – will the Councillor re-consider the decision NOT to introduce the levy in Oxford?

Written response

Thank you for your question on the introduction of a Late Night Levy.

In 2012, the General Licensing Team identified the potential income that a levy in the city could raise. At that time the proscribed arrangements were for the council to receive 30% of the funds, with Thames Valley Police receiving 70%. The Police and Crime Commissioner has now indicated that local authorities can receive the full amount, approximately £100k. These funds would have to be spent on licensing-related activities to improve the late-night economy and assist in the prevention of disorder.

It is important to consider a number of issues. Firstly alcohol-related violent crime and disorder is falling in the city, driven down by the long running Nightsafe operation that takes place each weekend in the city centre and East Oxford. We are also in the midst of our Purple Flag assessment that recognises the breadth of offer in our night-time economy, transport infrastructure and levels of safety. We have received positive feedback so far and having been re-accredited each year since its inception we are hopeful of doing so again.

The biggest challenge we face of introducing a Late Night Levy are the legal implications this could have on our Special Saturation Policy. This policy restricts the number, capacity and opening hours of licensed premises in the city centre and East Oxford. It has been in place for many years and has been a very powerful tool in managing potential disorder. We need to better understand the legal challenges that a levy could pose to the existing SSPs.

The introduction of a levy would also impact on businesses. We are coming out of the longest economic depression in UK history and we have ambitious plans for the city. We want to see a vibrant city centre, economically strong and a range of offer second to none in the region.

In the light of the above, we are commissioning a review of the options that will help the Council establish the optimum course of action.

Supplementary

Councillor Simmons thanked Councillor Sinclair for agreeing to review the options for the late night levy.

7. To the Board member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Jean Fooks: Dial a Ride

Can you tell Council when you will be announcing the improved transport for the elderly and disabled, to be funded from the £50k contingency, originally intended for a second Dial-a-Ride bus?

Written response

The City Council is still in discussion with the County Council and will look to bring negotiations to a conclusion shortly. We would like to see an improved Dial-a-Ride for elderly and disabled people in Oxford. But we are not prepared to hand over money unless as a result this County Council service improves'

Supplementary question

Are you consulting with AgeUK on the use of the available funds to meet the need?

Response

No, while it would be useful, we are continuing to press the County Council to work to improve transport for the elderly and disabled in the city. We would like to work with the County to make improvements to make life easier for those groups rather than just making cuts.

8. To the Board member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Wolff: Cycling schemes

In July, you stated that less than 5% of the £400,000 budget allocated more than two years ago for cycling schemes in the City has actually been spent. Can the Portfolio holder provide a list of the projects lined up for funding and indicate those being held up by the County Council?

Written response

I'm pleased to say the budget associated with Cycle City is now fully allocated and significant progress has been made over the summer. I'm grateful for the many excellent ideas for cycling improvements suggested by the public.

Projects include new and improved cycle parking at our Park and Ride sites, upgrade of the surface in Hinksey Park and Meadow Lane, removal of barriers including in Queens Lane, and co-funding to the Canals and Rivers Trust to upgrade of the canal towpath near Aristotle Lane. The City Council will also co-fund a County Council led project to redesign The Plain Roundabout with on-road cycling improvements.

In addition, and this is extra money, we expect to make a financial contribution to the revamp of Frideswide Square which will include significant on and off-road improvements for cyclists.

Unfortunately the County Council is refusing to consider other cycle improvements until the new Transport Strategy for Oxford is consulted upon and agreed. This is likely to mean considerable delays to on-road schemes such as prohibiting parked cars from cycle lanes.

Supplementary question

Could members have a list of planned schemes, their status, and likely timescale for completion as it would be useful to know what is accepted, held up and on track?

Response

Yes. County schemes are delayed until the county transport strategy is agreed but this Council has its own funds for some schemes, which will be carried out as there is no reason for delay.

9. To the Board member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Ruthi Brandt: St Giles Fair

Has any assessment ever been made regarding the effect that the St Giles Fair - and other city centre events which use many generators – might have on local air quality?

Written response

The impact of the generators at St Giles Fair on pollution levels is likely to be negligible because they operate for only a few days and in a small area of Oxford. However this may be something we can look at in future years.

Supplementary question

Will the impact be assessed and scope for improvement examined as soon as practical?

Response

Yes.

10. To the Deputy Leader, Board member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Ruthi Brandt: Covered market rent negotiations

Can the Leader update Council on the latest regarding the Covered Market rent negotiations?

Written response

The Council has met the Covered Market Traders Association (CMTA) and has written to the traders setting out formally two options; either an agreed settlement on the terms discussed at the meeting, or arbitration using an arbitrator agreed with the traders or an RICS appointment. The Council has asked for a decision by early October.

11. To the Deputy Leader, Board member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Jean Fooks: Covered market and financial planning

Once the Covered Market rent issue has been settled, the City will be receiving extra income not allowed for in the Medium Term Financial plan. What will this extra revenue be spent on?

Written response

The implications for the Council's budget of any eventual settlement of the rent determination for the Covered Market cannot be assessed until the terms are known.

Supplementary question

Will you commit to spending any extra unplanned money not provided for in the budget on implementing the recommendations made by scrutiny and the retail group and accepted by the city executive board?

Response

We will need to wait and see if there is a surplus before making plans to spend it. The executive board made commitments which we will honour. The future of the market is important; scrutiny made some valuable recommendations and we will do what we can to implement these.

12. To the Deputy Leader, Board member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Ruthi Brandt: Oxpens temporary car park

How much is the Oxpens temporary car park costing to build and operate and who is paying for it?

Written response

How much is the Oxpens temporary car park costing to build and operate and who is paying for it?

The budget for the new Redbridge coach parking bays and the city centre parking at Oxpens is £3.75m. The cost of operation is covered within the existing Westgate car park management budget. Both car parks are funded and operated by the City Council, and the full scheme is on time and within the budget.

Supplementary question

What is the budget for Oxpens itself? Who will meet any shortfall if the revenue does not cover the construction costs and what are the risks to the council?

Response

The budget for Oxpens is £1.6 million. The council will retain any underspend and there is a contingency for any shortfall. The Westgate car park would need to be replaced at our expense if there was no comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

13. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Dick Wolff: St Clements disruption

Now that the works at St Clements Car Park are coming to a close, what is the Council doing to help promote the many local small businesses that suffered during the disruption?

Written response

The Council budgeted £10,000 for advertising and promotion to support businesses in the St Clements area during the construction period, in addition to funding an alternative car park and a bus service. The building works have now been completed and there has been no indication of any need for further investment or support. Parking services report that the new car park is popular and well used.

Supplementary question

How many small businesses took up the offer of business rates reduction, and applied for higher relief if they had loss of income, and how much did this cost?

Response

A written answer would be supplied.

14. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Ruthi Brandt: Gloucester Green retail area

Can the portfolio holder update the Council about the current negotiations with New River Retail regarding Gloucester Green's retail area?

Written response

The Council is not in negotiations with New River at the present time. The developer has approached the Council and expressed an interest in joint working and shown some initial concept drawings.

Supplementary question

Could the Leader clarify the position either publically or to councillors?

Response

New River have taken over ownership of the square and have some initial thoughts. There were some outline proposals from initial meetings including changes to the cinema but nothing more. Updates on progress would be provided.

15. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Thomas: Cost of living

As Oxford is now one of the most expensive cities in the UK to live in, with numerous working men and women reliant on emergency food aid, does Councillor Price agree with me that Oxford City Council needs an action plan to see city jobs lifted out of minimum wages and onto living wages?

Written response

Oxford City Council established the Oxford Living Wage in 2009. Currently, no directly hired employee or agency worker working for the Council earns less than £8.36. In early 2014 we agreed to tie the Oxford Living Wage to the London Living Wage by setting it at 95% of whatever the London Living Wage is – which safeguards its future value.

We are a large employer and major commissioner of services, with an annual third party spend of £56m, and actively use this position to influence others by demonstrating the business and longer term benefit of supporting the Oxford Living Wage. In all tenders over £100k anyone awarded a contract for services with us must pay their staff and sub-contractors our Living Wage.

We also promote the Oxford Living Wage at any conferences we present at, writing to local employers and meetings to encourage them to join the campaign. A procurement survey established that of 100 companies we used 80% paid at least the OLW and 50% of these were based in Oxfordshire.

We will continue to champion the initiative.

Supplementary question

There was a lack of ambition on the living wage as a leader on this – how can the council encourage other businesses including the NHS, and make more efforts to encourage the city as a whole, to pay the living wage?

Response

Every opportunity was taken to encourage all employers to pay the living wage, but a consequence of privatisation was large employers paying the lowest possible wage to their staff, including paying the minimum wage. It was difficult to change without national pressure but the council would do its best.

16. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Sam Hollick: Westgate new housing

Can the portfolio holder explain whether/why the 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment will reduce the estimate of new housing in the Westgate development from 122 to 75 new dwellings?

Written response

The outline planning application from the Westgate Alliance only proposed a maximum of 75 residential units and this was approved by the WAPC. The current scheme has been developed with a very different approach and mix of uses than the earlier approved scheme from capital Shopping centres. The current proposals now have to be reflected in the SHLAA.

Supplementary question

Could the Leader clarify the numbers as this seems to be downgrading what we hoped to achieve?

Response

75 units were proposed at outline and the detail in the reserved matters application would be considered carefully during consultation and decision. The council would have to take a view about these proposals.

17. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Steve Goddard: Northern Gateway Area Action Plan consultation

Many residents had great difficulty in responding to the consultation on the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan.

One would-be respondent said

"The issue is that the pdf on your website claims to be editable and saveable: however it transpires that, whilst it is editable, the changes / text / insertions are not actually saved, so it appears to be an edited and saved file, but in fact contains no data.

There are two or three potential consequences of this:

- respondents may not realise that the saved file is in fact empty, so you receive empty and meaningless pdfs*
- respondents do realise this, but have to then spend considerable extra time to re-do their replies, thus possibly missing the deadline*
- respondents give up trying to respond"*

I know of several cases where each of these consequences came about. Would you agree that this is completely unacceptable and that the Council should at the very least have extended the consultation period to allow people to find a way to respond to this very important consultation?

Written response

Approximately 170 representations were received in relation to the Northern Gateway Proposed Submission Consultation. All have been accepted. The planning policy officers have responded promptly and helpfully each time that a member of the public reported a difficulty with the website. In cases where the form may have appeared blank to the respondent, when officers accessed the relevant field within the pdf form the comments were visible. Only five blank forms were received, and officers contacted those individuals in each case to explain that they would be able to resubmit their comments after the official close of the consultation.

It is worth noting that there were other ways to respond to the consultation: paper copies of the form were available in libraries, in council offices, and on request; the form could be printed from the website and filled in by hand; and responses by email or letter were accepted. We will of course continue to review our consultation methods in order to ensure an excellent customer experience.

Supplementary question

Given the problems, and the range of reactions from consultees, were any responses received after the consultation closed and were these accepted?

Response

Yes, responses received within a reasonable timescale after the close were accepted. It is not acceptable that this happened and there were improvements planned for the planning services section of the website.

18. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Liz Wade: NOVSCA Appraisal

The North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area (NOVSCA) Appraisal The Appraisal document was drafted and sent out for consultation some ten years ago. This draft now needs to be revisited and published as soon as possible so that the local community, City planners and developers have a clear evidence base from which all parties can articulate an argument. Currently every application requires separate research from which different conclusions can be drawn.

Can the Board member advise how this Appraisal can be progressed? The urgency of this is apparent from the fact that the draft is already used in Applications and in evidence by the Planning Inspectorate.

Written response

The Council is currently without a Conservation Team Leader. The vacant post has been advertised and it is planned to hold interviews shortly. Once the new post holder takes up their new role it will be possible to progress this important project.

Supplementary question

Why should this wait any longer - do we have the resources to take this forward now and is it possible to deal with this as a priority matter as it is important to do this?

Response

This will be discussed with the head of service.

19. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Craig Simmons: Resourcing planning services

With recent departures and sickness absence, coupled with a high workload, the planning enforcement team appears under-resourced taking a long time to respond to casework. Can the Portfolio holder outline what action is being taken to address the situation?

Written response

Planning enforcement workload has remained fairly constant, at just under 650 enforcement investigation cases per year.

In the last six months 2 of the 3 enforcement officer posts have fallen vacant. They proved difficult to fill, although two permanent appointments have now been made; one new officer started in September and another will be starting at the end of October. In the meantime cover was being provided by agency staff, albeit here too one temp left rather suddenly recently to take up a permanent job elsewhere and a temporary replacement is currently being sourced.

The Enforcement Service has kept abreast of the work by continuing investigating all complaints within the agreed timescales. Indeed the number of live investigations has recently been brought down to below 200. It is accepted however that with the above staff changes and recruitment pressures, there have been some instances where target dates have been exceeded. Where this has occurred officers have sought to keep service customers informed. The Head of City Development apologises for any such delays, but believes that now we are beyond summer holidays the impact on casework has been resolved.

Supplementary question

Can councillors take cases to the Head of City Development and be assured of action?

Response

The impact of the vacancies on the service is recognised, as are the reasons for difficulties in recruiting staff to a high-cost city. Where there is a clear and urgent remit for enforcement within an imminent deadline, then councillors should notify the head of service, director if necessary, and the leader.

20. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Ruthi Brandt: Planning applications

Does the Planning Portfolio holder share my frustration that the planning systems does not seem to allow for the track record of applicants to be taken into account as a material consideration when determining new applications from these same applicants?

Written response

The statutory framework for planning requires each application to be considered on its merits against the planning policy framework that is in force in the relevant local authority area. How members interpret the framework in relation to a

particular application is of course a matter of personal judgment, and other factors, such as those mentioned in the question may be drawn into account.

Supplementary question

As the history of the site can be a material consideration, should the track record be highlighted in reports to the planning committees?

Response

Previous applications on the site are listed in the committee reports but it is for members to interpret this information wisely, and in discussion weigh statutory requirements and material planning considerations appropriately. If councillors had particular concerns because of the history of a site, they could discuss these with the case officer.

21. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Thomas: Festival of light lantern parade

Given that the lantern parade was the single most popular aspect of last year's Festival of Light - as evidenced by Oxford City Council's own evaluation - can Councillor Price explain to the children of Oxford's primary schools why this event has been cancelled by the Council this year?

Written response

Last year's Christmas Light Festival was an enormous success. Regrettably, however, there were also strong objections because of the impact that the road closures had on bus services, local businesses, and colleges. Following this feedback and a review of the draft budget for this year's event, it was decided that Christmas Light Festival 2014 would not involve road closures but would continue to be based on creating opportunities for young people to be involved, as well as engaging schools and communities from across the city.

This year's festival will be a collaboration between more than 20 venues in Oxford providing live music and dance performances, arts installations and free cultural activities with the overall theme of "See Your City in a Different Light." The Westgate Centre have taken over as this year's lead sponsors and, in particular, are supporting the Young Persons' Light Installation project. Children from six local schools will be working with education trainees from the Oxford University Museums to create six large light installations inspired by the museums' collections. The first meeting of the children involved was very exciting with the decisions about the subjects of the installations made very democratically. The giant structures will evolve in the school settings before being brought together for a private view before the Festival and then will be on show throughout the festival weekend

The full range of participatory projects organised by the core festival team or in close partnership with our cultural partners are likely to involve up to 650 children and young people. In addition to the Light Installation project, these will include the Ice Station Digital project with Film Oxford, the Day of Song Schools Concert, the Ark T Stardust and Snowflakes dance project, and the Magdalen Road pop-up festival with Pegasus and Magdalen Road Studios.

Supplementary question

There was real disappointment among primary schools about the parade's cancellation; surely the council had enough funds for the necessary road closures so would the Leader give his full support to the lantern parade in 2015?

Response

The real issue was police concern about public safety due to the large numbers taking part and the narrow confined spaces on parts of all available routes. Discussions with the police about setting a routes and managing the event safely and without either using unsuitable streets or causing major disruption by closing major streets were taking place, and subject to this the Leader fully supported the parade.

22. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Elise Benjamin: Press releases

Does the Leader think that it is acceptable for the Council to put out a press release promoting a ward party organised by residents without the knowledge or agreement of the organisers?

Written response

No

23. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Sam Hollick: Councillor Champions

Can the Leader explain what powers and responsibilities the Councillors who have been appointed as Champions have?

Written response

Members who accept the role of 'champion' are asked to work closely with officers, other members and relevant people and organisations outside the Council to develop and promote our policies and services for the group or topic that is 'championed'. They have no constitutional powers. Recommendations and/or decisions are channelled through the appropriate portfolio holder.

24. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Thomas: Outside bodies and partnerships

In the interest of transparency and accountability, will the Leader commit to putting a full list of those Councillors and Officers who sit on outside bodies and partnerships on the Council's website? (Note: At the moment the 'Outside Bodies' list is incomplete).

Written response

Yes

25. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Dick Wolff: Staff exit interviews

Are staff exit interviews conducted and are these available for Councillors to scrutinise?

Written response

Frequently but not invariably; and certainly not.

Supplementary question

Who has access to these and how are they used to help the council improve?

Response

They are reviewed by the relevant senior staff and any necessary actions taken on any significant implications for the council.

26. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Jean Fooks: Printed agendas - supply

Many members have said that they prefer to have paper copies of agendas rather than have only electronic versions. As this is to enable them to fulfil their roles as councillors, would you agree that the Council should ensure that they receive their agendas in the form that is most convenient for them?

Written response

Members do have a choice as to the format in which they receive agenda. Those who chose to have an iPad as their means of receiving and viewing Council documentation understood that they would not then receive paper copies as well.

Because the majority of Members chose to receive and use iPads, efficiency savings of £13,000 over 3 years were agreed by Council. Members have a collective responsibility to take up the offers of training to make this choice work effectively for them and to assist in the delivery of the agreed savings.

Supplementary question

Would you change your mind if iPads turned out not to be as good as expected?

Response

Member's experience of using iPads for council work could be evaluated.

27. To the Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Jean Fooks: Printed agendas - budget

Members have been told that there is insufficient budgetary provision to supply the paper copies they are requesting. How much is the budgetary shortfall and how much contingency money was kept back for just such an eventuality in the current budget?

Written response

There is a forecast adverse variance on the printing budget in the present financial year of approximately £6,000. Having agreed the level of savings

indicated in the previous answer, members have a duty to assist in avoiding unnecessary 'double' expenditure caused by taking an expensive iPad and then asking to also receive paper copies.

Supplementary question

Should councillors be supported to do their work in ways that is best for them as it was a poor saving if councillors could not carry out their duties effectively?

Response

This was a topic for the members' reference group, and if there were concerns about communication these should be raised there. If there was an argument for a return to printed agendas a budget bid should be made. The use of iPads reduced paper and made an important contribution to reducing the council's carbon footprint.

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

(1) Andrew McKay attended and asked a question of the Leader of the Council about the Carfax by-election.

Councillor Bob Price provided a written response.

Question

The recent Carfax by-election was held at a time when the vast majority of the ward's electorate were not in residence. This is because the Carfax ward is dominated by a student population who are absent from Oxford during the summer. Registered voters in this ward who are students have complained that the by-election's timing meant they were unaware it was even being held. Given this and the by-election's historically low turnout, does the Council accept that this election failed effectively to capture the democratic will of the citizens of Carfax ward?

Written Response

Once the request for a poll is received from the requisite number of electors, who can be from any party or no party at all, the Returning Officer has no discretion in the timing of a by-election. It is of course impossible to know what the outcome of the by-election would have been if held at another time, and therefore not possible to tell whether the democratic will of the electorate that was expressed clearly on September 4th would have been the same if held later or earlier.

(2) Siestke Boeles attended and asked a question of the Leader of the Council about the Oxford Core Strategy.

Councillor Bob Price provided a written response:

Question

Does the Leader of the Council agree with South Oxford(shire) District Council that the Oxford Core Strategy is out of date as is it has no regard for the Duty to Cooperate as set out in the Localism Act?

Written response

The Core Strategy is not out of date. The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework establish criteria against which a Local Plan is tested for soundness. Our 20 year strategy has been re-assessed against these criteria and we have concluded that the Core Strategy that was adopted in 2011 after an independent public inquiry is fully compliant with national legislation and guidance.

The City Council undertook a considerable amount of engagement with its local authority neighbours and other stakeholders while the Core Strategy was being prepared. This amounted to the same process now being termed as the duty to cooperate by the Localism Act. This engagement with, in particular SODC, involved considerable dialogue about the need for support from other districts in meeting that part of Oxford's considerable housing need, which could not be accommodated within the City's administrative area. This led to the Central Oxfordshire chapter of the SE Regional Plan, that was adopted by the Secretary of State of the day, including a policy for a Strategic Development Area for 4,000 houses on land South of Grenoble Road. This was then picked up through in a specific section of the draft Core Strategy enabling such an urban extension to be integrated into the fabric of the City.

52. PETITIONS -TEMPLE COWLEY POOLS - OXFORD CITY COUNCIL MUST DELIVER VALUE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Nigel Gibson had submitted a petition to Council titled 'Oxford City Council must deliver value for the community' via the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2nd September 2014.

The petition stated "We the undersigned express our support for the Save TCP cic plans for the Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre and ask Oxford City Council to accept this bid as offering best value for the community and so keep health, fitness community facilities on this site"

Council had before it the report of the Head of Law and Governance setting out the subject of the petition and the procedure.

Nigel Gibson addressed Council, setting out the need for leisure facilities and a pool in Cowley and that the community bid to be submitted would provide improved community facilities. He asked for Council's support for the bid to allow the project to be delivered.

Councillor Rowley moved and Councillor Coulter seconded a motion that "Council notes the petition and move straight onto the next business."

Councillor Wolff moved and Councillor Hollick seconded a motion:
"Recognising

- that the Leader's statement in the Oxford Mail on June 16th suggesting that other developers (of the Temple Road site) "will be offering different combinations of housing and leisure/community use" was overridden by a refusal of the Labour majority to support any community/leisure component supported by public funds on the site at last July's Council meeting
- that the Temple Cowley Pools & Leisure Centre is registered as a Community Asset
- that a housing-only development would mean the loss of a designated community asset to Temple Cowley, and

- that this would represent an acknowledgment by the Council that any 'community asset' designation has no practical meaning as far as it is concerned

Council agrees to give highest priority to any tenders that include leisure/community use.”

The Head of Law and Governance advised Council that it was generally inadvisable to pass resolutions which fettering the decision making body's discretion, and that if agreed it could not be binding upon the City Executive Board as the decision maker when it considered all bids according to the set criteria .

On being put to the vote:

The motion proposed by Councillor Wolff was declared lost.

The motion proposed by Councillor Rowley was declared carried.

Council agreed to note the petition and move straight onto the next business.

53. OUTSIDE ORGANISATION/COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS AND QUESTIONS

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership/Growth Board

Council had before it the report of the Executive Director for Housing and Regeneration on behalf of Councillor Price informing it of the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership/Growth Board.

Councillor Bob Price introduced the report and answered questions.

Council agreed to note the report and the work of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

54. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BRIEFING

Council had before it the report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee on the activities of scrutiny and other non-executive councillors since the previous ordinary meeting of Council.

Councillor Craig Simmons, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, moved the report. He thanked Councillor Sanders (who had stepped down from the committee) for her time on the committee and welcomed Councillor Henwood. New review groups would be starting soon and councillors were encouraged to put their names forward for these.

Council noted the report.

55. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Council had before it six motions on notice and reached decisions as set out below.

(1) Privatisation of the Probation Service

Labour Group member Motion on Notice - proposed by Councillor John Tanner, seconded by Councillor Dee Sinclair.

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.

Decision

Following debate and voting, Council agreed to adopt the motion as set out above.

(2) Low Carbon Economy

Liberal Democrat Group member Motion on Notice - proposed by Councillor Jean Fooks, seconded by Councillor Andrew Gant.

Council notes the progress so far made to develop Oxfordshire's Low Carbon Economy, worth more than £1.15bn pa in sales, employing nearly 9000 people in more than 570 businesses.

It welcomes the award for Oxford's Community energy work, including the innovative loan of £2.3m to the Low Carbon Hub for solar panels on schools.

Council believes that Oxford can do more to develop the Low Carbon Economy, to the benefit of its citizens. It therefore asks the Executive Board to work with the LEP to:

- *Investigate sources of funding for supporting researchers in winning grants from EU and UK research councils.*
- *Prioritise training for skilled jobs in the low carbon building sector.*
- *Develop the business case for investment in the Smart City concept.*
- *Focus support on growth sectors such as alternative fuelled vehicles.*
- *Appoint a 'champion' to co-ordinate all the strands necessary for success.*

Amendment 1 – proposed by Councillor Brandt and accepted by the proposer of the motion (Councillor Fooks)

Add a further bullet point: *Increase its own direct investment in low carbon energy sources.*

Amendment 2 – proposed by Councillor Tanner and seconded by Councillor Price, and agreed after debate and on being put to the vote:

In paragraph 3, after LEP insert '*and others*' before '*to*'. Change last bullet point to read: '*Become champions to ensure all the strands necessary for success*'.

Decision

Both amendments were accepted and incorporated into the motion, then debated and put to the vote.

Council agreed to adopt the amended motion as follows:

Council notes the progress so far made to develop Oxfordshire's Low Carbon Economy, worth more than £1.15bn pa in sales, employing nearly 9000 people in more than 570 businesses.

It welcomes the award for Oxford's Community energy work, including the innovative loan of £2.3m to the Low Carbon Hub for solar panels on schools.

Council believes that Oxford can do more to develop the Low Carbon Economy, to the benefit of its citizens. It therefore asks the Executive Board to work with the LEP and others to:

- Investigate sources of funding for supporting researchers in winning grants from EU and UK research councils.
- Prioritise training for skilled jobs in the low carbon building sector.
- Develop the business case for investment in the Smart City concept.
- Focus support on growth sectors such as alternative fuelled vehicles.
- Increase its own direct investment in low carbon energy sources.
- Become champions to ensure all the strands necessary for success.

(3) The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and its possible effect on local service provision

Green Group member Motion on Notice - proposed by Councillor Sam Hollick, seconded by Councillor Ruthi Brandt.

Proposals under the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to govern trade relations between the EU and USA are currently being negotiated in secret.

UNISON believes TTIP is: "a profound threat to public services, which will not only lead to further liberalisation but will make it harder for government to regulate private companies providing public services. It could effectively prevent a future government bringing those services back in-house."

and that it "threatens to restrict the ability of local authorities and other public bodies to source and employ locally. This undermines their ability to use public money to achieve social and environmental outcomes through their supply chain and employment practices."

The TTIP will open up local authority procurement processes (already under scrutiny from EU Regulation) to US corporations meaning that contracts for

some services could be challenged by US companies in such a way so as to undermine local democracy, threaten staff pay, the Council's commitment to a living wage and employment conditions.

Amongst its provisions, the TTIP includes an Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism which allows multinational corporate investors to challenge government actions which they perceive as threatening to their investment. The cost to the Council of fighting any such legal action, were they to be challenged, could be immense.

Council therefore RESOLVES to call upon the leader of the council and the leaders of the two opposition groups to write to Oxford's MPs and MEPs, and to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, asking them to reject the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Amendment – proposed by Councillor Turner after the deadline for receipt of substantive changes to the motion:

Amend "*The TTIP will open up*" to "*The TTIP could open up*".

Add a new paragraph, after "*could be immense*".

"A new trade deal with the US could be of substantial benefit in improving the position of British exporters, and the ability to negotiate international trade deals is a benefit of British membership of the EU. However, it is essential that neither this trade agreement, nor the one with Canada currently being negotiated, threaten existing standards of environmental, social and labour market regulation. It is also imperative that vital public services in the UK, including the NHS and education, can continue to be provided publicly without challenge. It would be unwarranted for TTIP to include any extension of secretive ISDS procedures.

Amend the final paragraph to read:

"Council therefore RESOLVES to call upon the leader of the council and the leaders of the two opposition groups to write to Oxford's MPs and MEPs, and to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, asking them to reject any trade deal, including TTIP, if it leads to downward pressure upon environmental, social or labour market regulation, or the enforced opening up to private providers the provision of public services".

As the amendment was declared substantive by the mover of the motion, Councillor Turner moved suspension of Council procedure rule 11.18(f) to allow his amendment to be debated; this was voted on and agreed by Council.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Coulter. The amendment was agreed after debate and being put to the vote.

Decision

The amendment was accepted and incorporated into the motion, then debated and put to the vote.

Council agreed to adopt the amended motion as follows:

Proposals under the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to govern trade relations between the EU and USA are currently being negotiated in secret.

UNISON believes TTIP is: “a profound threat to public services, which will not only lead to further liberalisation but will make it harder for government to regulate private companies providing public services. It could effectively prevent a future government bringing those services back in-house.” and that it “threatens to restrict the ability of local authorities and other public bodies to source and employ locally. This undermines their ability to use public money to achieve social and environmental outcomes through their supply chain and employment practices.”

The TTIP could open up local authority procurement processes (already under scrutiny from EU Regulation) to US corporations meaning that contracts for some services could be challenged by US companies in such a way so as to undermine local democracy, threaten staff pay, the Council’s commitment to a living wage and employment conditions.

Amongst its provisions, the TTIP includes an Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism which allows multinational corporate investors to challenge government actions which they perceive as threatening to their investment. The cost to the Council of fighting any such legal action, were they to be challenged, could be immense.

A new trade deal with the US could be of substantial benefit in improving the position of British exporters, and the ability to negotiate international trade deals is a benefit of British membership of the EU. However, it is essential that neither this trade agreement, nor the one with Canada currently being negotiated, threaten existing standards of environmental, social and labour market regulation. It is also imperative that vital public services in the UK, including the NHS and education, can continue to be provided publicly without challenge. It would be unwarranted for TTIP to include any extension of secretive ISDS procedures.

Council therefore RESOLVES to call upon the leader of the council and the leaders of the two opposition groups to write to Oxford’s MPs and MEPs, and to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, asking them to reject any trade deal, including TTIP, if it leads to downward pressure upon environmental, social or labour market regulation, or the enforced opening up to private providers the provision of public services.

(4) End the injustice of tax dodging

Labour Group member Motion on Notice - proposed by Councillor Bev Clack, seconded by Councillor Tom Hayes.

While many ordinary people face falling household income and rising costs of living, some multinational companies are avoiding billions of pounds of tax from a tax system that fails to make them pay their fair share. Local governments in developing countries and the UK alike would benefit from a fairer tax system where multinational companies pay their fair share, enabling authorities around the world to provide quality public services. This council asks the UK government

to listen to the strength of public feeling and to act to end the injustice of tax dodging by large multinational companies, in developing countries and the UK.

Decision

Council agreed to adopt the motion as set out above.

(5) Municipal bonds

Liberal Democrat Group member Motion on Notice - proposed by Councillor Jean Fooks.

Council notes:

- *that local authorities across the country and across political parties want to have more powers to raise their own funds. This is particularly relevant at present as Governments of all complexions are likely to be reducing central grant as local demand for services increases*
- *that the Local Government Association believes that having a council-owned agency could save local authorities over £1bn in borrowing cost compared to the Public Loans Board*
- *that by July 2014 22 councils of all kinds had pledged almost £3m towards the setting up of a municipal bonds agency.*

Council further notes that although the City Council is not looking to borrow at present, there could be big gains in the future from being able to access funds for capital investment in such 'invest-to-save' projects as renewable energy installation and specialist housing.

Council therefore asks the Executive Board to investigate the opportunities offered by joining the agency now rather than wait and be left behind.

Decision

Councillor Fooks' motion on notice was not considered as the time allowed by the constitution for motions on notice had elapsed.

(6) Making Oxford a Social Enterprise City

Green Group member Motion on Notice – proposed by Councillor Dick Wolff.

This Council welcomes the announcement that Oxfordshire has become the UK's first Social Enterprise County and congratulates the Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Partnership (OSEP), an innovative new partnership set up by Oxford Brookes University, the University of Oxford and Student Hubs to foster and support social enterprise locally.

This Council recognises the value of Social Enterprises to the Council and the local economy and aspires to join other cities in becoming one of the UK's first Social Enterprise Cities.

This would require, amongst other things, that the Council:

- *Establish business rate policies which support long-term and sustainable social and economic value creation.*

- *Explore the possibility of creating “Meanwhile Enterprise Zones” and “Social Enterprise Zones”.*
- *Review its policies to ensure that it is commissioning, procuring and buying goods and services in a manner which maximises social value (under the Social Value Act).*
- *Provide funding support for social innovations and social enterprises*
- *Look at ways and means of stimulating and supporting social enterprise in the area*

Council therefore asks CEB to instruct officers to draw up a draft Social Enterprise Strategy for Oxford City.

Decision

Councillor Wolff’s motion on notice was not considered as the time allowed by the constitution for motions on notice had elapsed.

56. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

None.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm

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