

STATEMENT OF COUNCILLOR NUALA YOUNG

Date of Interview: 10 May 2011
Place of Interview: Oxford City Council Offices
Interviewed: Councillor Nuala Young
Interviewer: Tim O'Gara, Solicitor ("The Investigator")

I, Councillor Nuala Young, of 46 Tree Lane Iffley, Oxford, OX4 4EY state as follows,

1. This statement is based on my interview with the Investigator on 10 May 2011. I confirm that I have been advised of the investigation procedure and that I was content to be interviewed alone in person by the Investigator at Oxford City Council offices on 10 May 2011.
2. I have been a member of Oxford City Council since 2006.
3. I have been provided with a copy of Councillor Turner's complaint and I have identified the following documents for the Investigator to consider
 - a. The Agenda of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 22 February 2011
 - b. The minutes of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 22 February 2011
 - c. The Report on Destination Management to the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 22 February 2011
4. I have been referred to the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on 21 February 2011 during which it is recorded that I had asked three questions for which written answers were provided and during the course of the meeting, I asked supplementary questions in respect of each question. There was no report or decision under consideration at this meeting in respect of tourism. I was trying to establish why the City Council was handing over the Tourist Information Centre to Destination Management Oxfordshire. I was concerned that the City Council was spending £160,000 that was benefitting the whole of the County, rather than the residents of

Oxford. I felt that this money could be better used for the city's needs in these difficult financial times and that my fellow councillors needed to be aware of this. Because of my 20 year's experience of working for the Information Centre and the year as a voluntary publicity officer for the guides I could evaluate better the claims being made in favour of Destination Management Oxfordshire: who would benefit most from it and who was contributing most. I wanted to establish how the Council was intending to spend this money. In asking the question, I hoped to put the city's spending and its losses into the public arena.

5. It is my understanding of the Code of Conduct that it is not necessary to make a declaration of interests when asking a question for information. My questions at Full Council were for information only. There was no matter under consideration. However, where there was a report being considered at the Scrutiny Committee, I declared a personal interest in the relevant item.
6. I had spoken with other members of the Green Group prior to the Full Council meeting and the general view was that I did not need to declare an interest because I was only asking a question, therefore I did not feel the need to declare a personal or prejudicial interest at the Full Council meeting.
7. I was asked to substitute at the last moment for the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the following day, 22 February 2011 where a report in respect of Destination Management Oxford was on the Agenda. I was not aware at that time that Councillor Turner was going to make a complaint against me but having consulted my fellow councillors, I made a declaration of personal interest just to be on the safe side. The difference between the meeting of Full Council on the 21st and the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd was that there was no decision under consideration at Full Council, whereas there was at the Scrutiny Committee.
8. I see my role as a councillor as a representative of the people in my ward, as well as a representative of the whole of the East, which I chair and as a representative of the

people of Oxford. I believe that my role is both strategic in the sense that as an elected representative, I have a duty to protect the financial well-being of the City which I represent. I had also been discussing this issue with one of the East Oxford Bed & Breakfast landladies, Vivian Alexander at Heather House who was also concerned at the move to a handover of the Information Centre to the DMO.

9. Before the Council meeting I spoke to Digna Martinez, the tour manager of the Tourist Information Centre, about the questions that I was intending to ask at the Full Council meeting and ascertained that the changes in respect of Destination Management Oxfordshire would not affect the tour guides in any way. She assured me that the changes would make no difference to the tour guides, so I did not feel the need to declare either a personal or a prejudicial interest as this was therefore a matter not directly affecting me in any personal or professional way.
10. Just as a matter of background and perspective, I would like to state that I am not seeking more work . I find that I have more offers of work than I can manage and so often do not give my availability for tours to Digna Martinez at the TIC. For the last ten years or so, only about 10 percent of my tours have been for the TIC.
11. I generally put my Council work before my paid work. In the past, few years I have been prepared to turn down paid work because of my duties as a councillor. For example, I had to deal with 3 appeals on Planning, for which I had to refuse 10 days work in all – the Coach and Horses and 2 appeals for Bartlemas. I also had to turn down paid work when I attended a London conference on the Well Being Clause in Local Government Act 2002 to see if there .was any way in which we as a Council could support our small businesses better.
12. During my time as a councillor, I have received annual training on the Code of Conduct. I am aware that the Monitoring Officer will advise members on interests, however I have not approached the monitoring officer in the past for advice on this

and on this occasion, I did not feel that it was necessary to do so as I was only intending to ask a question.

13. I made a declaration of interests on 23 July 2009 in which I declared that my employment or business is "freelance tour guiding". I subsequently amended this section of the declaration of interests on 15 March 2011 to refer to my employment or business as a "Freelance Tour Guide for many companies including Tourist Information Centre". In the future, I would make a declaration of interest as a precaution when asking a question at a meeting, even though I do not believe that I have to.

14. I confirm that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed:

A black rectangular box redacting the signature.

Date:

23rd June 2011