

To: Council

Date: 26 November 2018

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Board Members

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council
3. This report has been republished following the Council meeting and lists the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda.

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Addresses in part 2

1. Address by Dr Ruvi Ziegler, Chair, Oxford European Association - Support for the Oxford European Charter

As Chair of the Oxford European Association, I am delighted to commend to the Council the Oxford European Charter, which the Oxford European Association adopted on 23rd October 2018 nem con.

The OEA is proud of Oxford's open, diverse, and tolerant character: 1 in 10 Oxford residents was born elsewhere in the EU. The OEA is determined for Oxford to remain an international, open, and welcoming European city. We call on all employers, institutions and authorities in Oxford to do all they can to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights to which EU27 citizens are entitled, and to ensure they are not discriminated against in any way.

The OEA is vigorously campaigning for our rights as Europeans. It firmly believes that Oxford's EU27 residents should have their rights fully maintained *if* the UK leaves the EU. This must include a lifelong guarantee that EU27 citizens can leave the UK and return thereto, and that as residents, their right to vote in all local government elections is maintained. Electoral eligibility signifies membership of the communities in which EU27 have made their home; it demonstrates that they remain equal, in law and in fact. It enables EU27 citizens to continue to contribute to their local communities. EU27 citizens should be able to continue to fully participate in civic life.

The OEA also believes that, irrespective of Brexit, the UK should be much more forthcoming to EU27 citizens who have made their homes here by extending their electoral participation rights that so they are suitably enfranchised in national elections and referendums, and by reducing the financial burden of naturalisation for those who wish to do so to the cost of administration from its current, prohibitively expensive level. This is not only the right thing to do, but also the right time to do it, as a response to the exclusionary and unwelcoming nature of much of the discourse in this country around immigration.

Indeed, we are heartened by the cross-party support for the motion, which reflects the appreciation of residents across Oxford to the contribution that migrants, from the rest of Europe and around the world, have made to our city.

We sincerely hope other cities, Oxfordshire county council and, ultimately, Westminster will follow suit.

Written Response from Councillor Brown

Thank you to you and the OEA for the work you are doing to continue to campaign for the kind of open and inclusive society that on this council we are all committed to achieving. You will know that we have a motion later on the council agenda which has cross party support and that this council has repeatedly stated its opposition to the government's Brexit plans and its support for our European citizens

There was no further response at the meeting.

2. Address by Artwell - Farndon Court

Farndon Court was formerly Oxford's Young Women Christian Association's (YWCA) covenanted accommodation which uniquely offered accommodation to Oxford's vulnerable women.

The housing association Catalyst purchased Farndon Court with its covenant and tradition of offering accommodation commensurate with working women income. Farndon Court rents were really affordable for women earning Oxford's average income.

The recently reported sale of Farndon Court is a moral tragedy for the seller Catalyst; the purchaser Oxford University and the fifty residents who have been served with the two months eviction notice.

Catalyst's mission statement which speaks of assisting working people with affordable accommodation is undermined by Catalyst's decision to sell Farndon Court to Oxford University. Furthermore, despite Oxford University's commitment to gender justice, the University's purchase of Farndon Court deprives Oxford vulnerable women of precious accommodation.

The former site of Temple Cowley Pools and Gym has been purchased by Catalyst.

Indeed, Catalyst benefits greatly from public money and acts in "partnership" with the City Council to provide accommodation. The City Council ought to be troubled by Catalyst's decision of putting profits before its mission statement and for betraying the women refuge tradition of Farndon Court.

I call on Oxford City Council, to publicly support the women of Farndon Court by publicly ending all housing contracts with Catalyst and identifying a building which can be used to as a replacement refuge for the vulnerable women of Oxford.

Written Response from Councillor L Smith

The City Council recognises that the decommissioning of Farndon Court is a reasonable position for Catalyst to take given the poor quality of design and it needing significant investment to make it fit for 21st century living. Given the nature of the required works then vacant possession is required. However, we are quite rightly concerned that residents are supported in finding suitable alternative accommodation. Strong representation has been made to Catalyst to ensure this happens and good progress is being made with 39 households out 59 having been supported in finding a new home. Catalyst continues to work proactively and closely with the City council particularly with those more vulnerable households but also with other housing providers and letting agencies.

Catalyst continues to be a valued registered provider partner investing in the City on such projects as Temple Cowley and Blackbird Leys to provide much needed high quality affordable housing.

Supplementary response from Councillor L Smith at the meeting

I would like to make it clear that Farndon Court is not a refuge and it is not the case that all the residents are vulnerable. It is a market rent property in the private rented sector. It is an unfortunate situation that some of the long term residents find themselves in. Catalyst are a valued partner of this Council and we have been working very closely with them, in particular the 12 residents who might be regarded as having vulnerabilities are being given extra help.

Councillor Smith then read out a brief statement from Catalyst: *“The decision to dispose of assets is not an easy one, but we remain committed to making good business decisions to achieve our core social purpose of providing housing in Oxford and the South East for those that need a home most. Money raised by this sale will be reinvested to we continue to grow, expand and improve our housing stock and deliver more affordable homes at places such as Temple Cowley and Blackbird Leys.”*

3. Address by Artwell - Customers

Publicly elected Councillors, how can the Council Tax payers of Oxford be accurately described as “customers” as Cllr Chapman portfolio holder implies?

Despite the City Council having privatised or outsourced the majority of its services and responsibilities, the Council Tax payers of Oxford fund the City Council; including a considerable contribution to the staff’s pension.

For this reason, I call on Oxford City Council to address the council tax payers as Funders and cease from describing those who fund the City Council as “customers.”

Written Response from Councillor Chapman

My portfolio for “Customer-focused services” has the remit to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of Council services to residents and businesses and the continued success of the wholly-owned Oxford Direct Services Ltd.

This covers a wide range of services from waste collection, to housing repairs, building control and administration of benefits, to name a few.

The portfolio title recognises that to ensure the best customer experience for our residents and businesses, the services delivered need to be as streamlined as possible delivering real value and outcomes, and the quality of the interaction to make that happen needs to be timely, accessible and accurate.

The portfolio title emphasises the way we deliver our services to our residents and businesses, and recognises that there is a range of services and relationships that is not simply limited to council tax payers.

Almost all the City Council’s services remain in- house and we as a Labour Council are proud of having avoided the pitfalls of employing companies like Carillion, who have often saved money in the short term but damaged services in the long run, with weaker accountability and sense of local ownership.

As I have explained before in answers to the speaker, Oxford Direct Services Ltd is wholly owned by the Council as its only shareholder. It is not privatised or outsourced. Its profits are ploughed back into funding the City’s needs - a very different and much better model of public service than rewarding private shareholders.

Supplementary response from Councillor Chapman at the meeting

I don’t wish to get into a semantic discussion about customers. But what I do want to do, and I have said this before, is to re-iterate that to carry on saying that we privatise or outsource the majority of our services is absolute nonsense. We have to use every opportunity to put the record straight. So I will put the record straight now. That is not our policy, we have never believed in it, we have always kept all our services in-house,

we kept out 8000 council houses when we could have sold them off. How many examples do I have to give that we oppose privatisation and outsourcing. For the record we don't outsource the majority, or 50% or 30% of our services.

4. Address by Mr Stefan Piechnik - Acknowledgement of public involvement resulting in substantial monetary savings to the Council

I am here to ask for the acknowledgement of my actions that led to an estimated £1.5 Million pounds savings to the City Council Budget in not re-cladding three out of five Oxford Tower Blocks.

To make long story short, after the disastrous Grenfell Tower fire, on 14 June 14th, 2017, Mr Stephen Clarke sent the residents assurances about the fire safety of our homes. The assurances were in clear discrepancy with work schedules provided to me earlier that year, which explicitly stated non-fire resistant Trespa Vitrabond composite cladding panels and non-fire resistant StoTherm foam insulation panels; specifications common for all five Tower blocks.

Given my disappointment with Council officers earlier and the gross level of concern, I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister Theresa May on 19 June 2017. I argued for immediate intervention to save the cost in the still ongoing works. On 26 June 2017, the Prime Minister thanked me, and referred the case to the Department of Communities and Local Government. As you surely know, subsequent prompt checks found the works unsafe and required changing the already installed cladding on TWO Tower Blocks at the cost of One Million pounds (Extraordinary Council meeting 2017 08 22).

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that because of my prompt actions the Council had to replace cladding only on TWO tower blocks, not all FIVE of them. By proportion I estimate to have saved the Council £1.5 Million in re-cladding costs. This is directly attributable to my early action which allowed PROSPECTIVE changes in material specifications for the remaining three Tower Blocks.

I would like to state explicitly that I do not expect a word from Councillor Rowley, who (e.g. not limited to)

- (i) incorrectly assured the Council about the state of First Tier Tribunal submission (Council meeting 2016 04 18)
- (ii) stated details of consultations that he could not support by any evidence (Council meeting 2016 09 29) and
- (iii) shamelessly dismissed a reasonable request from Councillor Roz Smith even to apologise to Leaseholders for the eye-watering wrong £50,000 demands for the vastly unwarranted works to our homes (Council meeting 2018 07 23).

Instead, I respectfully ask the Council leader, Cllr Susan Brown to check the facts herself and say what measures the Council can take to acknowledge my contribution, hopefully through a customary cash award in proportion to the vast savings made. Not the words, but the scale of award would truly reflect the actual level of Council's welcome to public involvement in running the local affairs.

Written response from Councillor Brown

The decisions regarding tower block cladding were made internally based on ever-changing government guidance, building regulations and professional advice.

While we are aware that many hundreds, if not thousands of individuals, local authorities, landlords and building owners wrote to the government on fire safety issues

around that sad period, we do not acknowledge that Mr Piechnik had any influence or any personal involvement in the decisions taken by the Council.

As such it is felt that it would be entirely unwarranted and inappropriate to make a cash award to him. We will check the facts of the case.

Supplementary response from Councillor Brown at the meeting

Thank you. I would re-iterate that it would be entirely inappropriate to make a cash payment. I agree the last sentence of my response does not sit terribly well. We have of course checked the facts of the case. I think we meant that we would be happy to check the facts again and that we are confident that it would support the position we have stated.

5. Address by Artwell – This Council 2020

This Council's plans for Oxford City Centre will result in Bus Stops being located far from the main shopping area. Our society is ageing; with mobility difficulties affecting an increasing number of people of all ages.

Additionally, it is clear that Oxford City Council would like Oxford City Centre to be free from people who earn a living from asking the general public for assistance. Those in need are still part of Oxford society. It is widely believed and reported that a considerable percentage of today's needy formerly held responsible positions in the Merchant Navy or Military Service.

Finally, the current plan for electric vehicles only for Oxford City Centre by 2020, will not create any difficulty for the few who are able to purchase one of Mr Elon Musk's Tesla vehicles.

However, will the City Council abandon its current plans for an all-electric Oxford City Centre and instead concentrate on using the Council's resources to improve the entire life experience for families living on Oxford's Living Wage?

Written Response from Councillor Clarkson

Oxford City Council is not the transport authority and does not control where bus stops are located.

The City Council is currently undertaking two full public consultations that involve the city centre – the City Centre Conservation Area and the Local Plan. In addition, jointly with the County Council we commissioned a report from Phil Jones Associates on *Oxford City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy*. As we have repeatedly made clear, the report is and remains advisory – designed to help shape thinking on the Local Plan and the County Council's forthcoming *Local Transport Plan 5*.

The City Council continues to work with partners with the aim of ensuring no-one needs to sleep rough in Oxford. Under the Trailblazer programme we are also offering assistance upstream to those leaving hospital, prison and other institutions to help ensure they don't end up homeless. Oxford City Council is the main organisation trying to tackle the gross inequality across the city, and to suggest that we do not care about those in need is an outrageous slur.

The City Council is committed to start the phased introduction of a zero emissions zone in the city centre from 2020. All types of non-emitting vehicles will be permitted, not just electric. The zone will start in a small area of the city centre and then expand out to include more streets and more vehicle types over time. Crucially, the proposals are

dependent on technology. The City Council absolutely will not abandon its plans for a Zero Emission Zone. Oxford city centre has toxic and high levels of air pollution in some streets. Currently, people are living, working and commuting in an invisible killer. Not only *can* we cut air pollution and improve people's entire life experience, we *are* doing this.

There was no further response at the meeting.

6. Address by Sharone Parnes – IHRA definition

Hello and thank you for allowing me to speak here – again - today. At your July meeting, in this place, I attended as an Oxfordshire resident, an elected Councillor and a Jew (...not necessarily in that order), to draw your attention to the fact that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism had not yet been considered for adoption by this Authority. I noted that 17 months earlier – in January 2017 – the then- Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to all Council Leaders, stating: “Anti-Semitism must be understood for what it is – an attack on the identity of people who live, contribute and are valued in our society. In light of this, I would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage you to formally adopt the definition and consider its application in your own authority.”

Having asked if your Leader would undertake to put a motion for debate at the next Council meeting, I concluded my remarks with a clarification specifically stating that by the IHRA definition I meant the full definition including the published examples; and I also noted that the Chief Rabbi had said altering the guidelines would send a message of contempt to the Jewish Community. I left this place feeling that the Council was welcoming to me, and commendably open. But I also left feeling somewhat confused. Subsequently, I also feel a little bit duped. Here's why:

During proceedings here your Leader took an admirably candid step of acknowledging the lapse of time in addressing the particular issue, and her subsequently published letter to the current Secretary of State sought to confirm “on behalf of Oxford City Council that we support the IHRA definition as part of our commitment to tackle anti-Semitism and associated hate crimes in our city.” But it transpired Oxford City Council had been – and remains - ambiguous as to whether it accepts the full IHRA examples of anti-Semitism.

Initially the Board of Deputies of British Jews published social media announcements applauding Oxford City Council for adopting “the full IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, with all its appended examples, showing its commitment to tackling this ugly form of prejudice.” But shortly thereafter, all these posts were deleted. Surely there must have been a reason.

A short time later, on August 7th, the IHRA itself published a statement (a copy of which I have submitted for your consideration in advance of today's meeting) with explanations by Experts of the UK Delegation to the IHRA on the Working Definition of Antisemitism, explaining, among other relevant things, that “Any ‘modified’ version of the IHRA definition that does not include all of its 11 examples is no longer the IHRA definition.” The IHRA statement explains, “If one organisation or institution can amend the wording to suit its own needs, then logically anyone else could do the same. We would once again revert to a world where antisemitism goes unaddressed simply because different entities cannot agree on what it is.” So, by the standards of the IHRA which achieved internationally recognition on its definition of anti-Semitism, it is not clear that Oxford City Council has actually adopted it.

Just this month we have seen continuations of anti-Semitism in this City, including a swastika prominently painted on a wall and a Nazi salute at a public event. And every time the IHRA definition is mentioned in this full-Council (including in July and again at your previous meeting), it is not only noted that the definition actually doesn't preclude criticism of Israel but Members here go further in incorporating criticism of Israel into the discussion. It wouldn't be remiss for Members of this Council to acknowledge, at least for balance, that every now and then even the Israeli government displays positive actions, too! But really criticism or praise of Israel or any other country is really not the issue, however much some seem determined to deflect the focus of discussion on the IHRA definition.

Leadership involves flexibility, but on hate crime and prejudice there is no room for ambiguity. Oxford City Council owes it to constituents and neighboring communities, to confirm unequivocally whether or not it has adopted the full IHRA definition including all of its 11 examples. I ask for such confirmation today, whether it does so or not: Yes, or no?

Please see Appendix 1 for further information.

Written or verbal response from Councillor Brown

Thank you for your contribution Councillor Parnes. Oxford City Council's position on antisemitism is unambiguous, and as I stated previously when you addressed this chamber - we have adopted the full IHRA definition [as of course the Labour Party has done nationally.]

Where it is in our power to act – as was the case with the racist graffiti in the past week – we do so without hesitation. The swastika and other offensive graffiti were removed by our ODS teams within 24 hours.

Supplementary response from Councillor Brown at the meeting

We have never sought to distinguish between any of the many definitions and we have adopted the full IHRA definition. We take very seriously the tackling of any racism in the city and we have clear policies to ensure that we deal with incidents such as graffiti very quickly.

7. Address by Jabu Nala-hartley – What is Oxford Anti-racist city?

It is an organised platform which seeks to have an Anti-racist educational workshop in a safe place. I was one of the facilitators of the workshop which took place at the East Oxford community centre on the 27 October 2018. Along with Councillor Shaista Aziz, it was a well-attended workshop by all sections of the community from Oxford.

My name is Jabu Nala-Hartley. I am the co-founder of Oxford Unites as an Anti-racist city. I came to Oxford to join my mother who was studying at Ruskin College in Oxford in 1984. I attended Milham Ford girl school and later went to join Oxford college of further Education. I have also attended Courses at Oxford Brookes university as well as Ruskin College.

I have also worked around Oxford communities as a WEA tutor as well as working as a Royal mail Postal worker, Retail Oxford Story and a precarious worker as an employee at the JR hospital and Churchill hospital.

My experiences have given me the opportunities to come across all peoples of Oxford who work in Oxford and come from various parts of the world from all different backgrounds, serving Oxford in different roles, from student, teachers, postal workers, NHS workers to trade unions etc

The theme of Oxford Anti-racist city is to explore open dialogue about issues that affect this community of Oxford. Racism has had an impact in all these areas that I have come across. The aim is to look at:

- How are people impacted by racism around their communities?
- Are people aware of how they can be impacted?
- How does it affect people structurally
- What are the areas of concern
- Education (deconstruction/decolonisation of the curriculum)
- Employment
- Immigration
- Police
- Power

What happened at the workshop?

Themes were discussed as to how all people are affected by racism. How can we begin to have a dialogue as a city?

One person was affected by a situation where as a white person, she was out with her black friend, who was racially abused and she had to step in. Someone was affected by the fact that the majority of her constituency voted for Brexit.

Another incident was a community worker observed two kids black and white. The white boy who was causing trouble was let to get away from the police whilst a black disabled boy was tasered by police. When she enquired what will happen to the Black boy she was told she will be informed by letter or email. She has never been contacted.

Also we explored education issues around the curriculum. It still does not cover BAME oriented education e.g. black history. In employment there are high percentages of BAME discipline especially in the NHS. Statistics are still reflecting low recruitment records in certain jobs for BAME people.

Having been part of two historical days, the 16 November in Oxford, the Bennon protest and the 17 November on the estimated 40k Anti-racist March in London. I am enthused by the numbers of people who came out of their daily routines to say no to racist rhetoric.

I am also aware that we live in a population of millions of people, which makes 40k only a drop in the ocean. As we protested in Oxford and marched in London. I cannot get rid of that bitter after taste of having the Tommy Robinson supporters, coming to disrupt the protest by signing the Nazi offensive symbols. The Fascist that stood across the road from the 40k march in London. In Oxford to be woken up to alerts of a Nazi offensive symbol (swastika) drawn in a public pavilion.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. This racist rhetoric can only be eradicated by true honesty. We have to engage in powerful conversation with ourselves, families friends etc.

Why do you stand outside and watch people who are targeted and say nothing? That is where I feel is the starting point. People talk about feeling defeated, I feel that is a delusion. If we engage in powerful Conversation we can understand each other and move forward as a Community at peace with itself.

Thank you for inviting me to council.

I will also like to request the Council to give this project some further support.

Written Response from Councillor Brown

Thank you for your comments Ms Nala-Hartley. As I am sure you are aware, this council vigorously opposes racism, works with the police to tackle hate crime and seeks to foster real cohesion across all Oxford's communities. There is no place for racism in this city.

I would encourage Ms Nala-Hartley to talk to her Ward councillors about Council support for the project.

Supplementary response from Councillor Brown at the meeting

Thank you for raising these very important issues. I would encourage the speaker to contact her ward councillors regarding support for the project. I wish to reiterate the points I made previously and reassure the speaker that this Council takes seriously the issue of racism in the city and will work with communities to tackle it.

Questions in part 2

8. Question from Judith Harley / Artwell – Temple Cowley Library Parking

At April's full council meeting, I addressed council outlining problems with car and cycle parking at Temple Cowley Library caused by preparations for construction work on the former Temple Cowley Pools (TCP) site. Cycle parking has been resolved, as the bike racks were moved to a more visible and accessible position very soon after my address. However, nothing has changed regarding car parking.

The verbal response I received from Councillor Brown in April, as printed in the draft minutes, was:

"I will ask officers to investigate and respond to you."

By July's full council meeting I had received no response, so I again addressed council outlining the car parking problems. The verbal reply which I received from Councillor Hollingsworth, as published in the minutes, states:

"I apologise for the failure to respond to you – this was an oversight. Negotiations are underway between the City Council, Catalyst and the owner of an adjacent site to allow a site owned by the City Council to be used as temporary parking for the library. I have impressed on the officer leading this that this is a matter which now needs urgent resolution."

It is now nearly the end of November, seven months after my initial address, and three months since my last address on this matter. The Library still has no parking provision. What is your definition of the timescale of "urgent resolution"?

I understand that the "adjacent site" referred to by Councillor Hollingsworth is in Cox's Yard, currently used for vehicle repairs, which contains a small, land-locked area owned by the City Council. This area has no direct road access, except by arrangement with the site owner over his land. Despite Councillor Hollingsworth's impressing on the officer concerned that "this matter now needs urgent resolution", this area is being used for contractor parking, not library parking. The contractors have provided themselves with ample parking on the adjoining school field and at the rear of the adjacent Silver Band Hall. The Library has no parking provision.

At present the Library is undergoing roof repairs, for roof damage which may have been exacerbated by the adjoining building work. The Library is surrounded by scaffolding, which makes access to, and parking on, its slip road unsuitable.

When will the negotiations between the City Council, Catalyst, and the adjacent site owner be completed, so that Temple Cowley Library can have some parking provision?

Written Response from Councillor Hollingsworth

Following an initial meeting in July with the owner of the adjoining site which has the access on to Temple Road, the City Council wrote to him confirming that the Council's land would be used for temporary library parking. Legal agreements have been drafted, and are ready to issue. Catalyst have queried whether the responsibility for providing the parking is theirs or the City Council's: it is the Council's view that the responsibility to provide the parking is Catalyst's. The site is already cleared by Catalyst's contractors, and the City Council will therefore arrange for the appropriate final preparations and signage to be completed in the expectation that Catalyst will sign the appropriate legal documentation in short order.

Officers have raised with Catalyst the use of the Council's site by their contractors to park vans and Catalyst have said that they are not using it as the allotted parking is on the Silver Band Hall site. There are instances of parking on the site but it is not obvious where the vehicles are from. Officers will continue to monitor the situation and take the necessary action to keep the site clear.

There was no further response at the meeting.

9. Question from Mr Nigel Gibson – Why is Oxford City Council STILL Discriminating Against the Disabled, and WHAT PRICE DISABILITY

In now three previous Council meetings I've brought to your attention the way in which you are discriminating against the disabled and others qualifying for a Bonus card by increasing the admission charge at certain times of the week by 53.85%, from £1.30 to £2.00.

Telling me that the price increase is to 'encourage' those on the Bonus card to get their exercise at less busy times is clear and obvious discrimination – there is no similar charging regime for the general user. There are many reasons why a Bonus card user may want to exercise at a particular time, and if they find the facilities too busy they can surely choose for themselves, without an enforced additional charge as an 'incentive'.

It was extremely disappointing at the last Council meeting to have my question not answered. I am therefore asking it again. As you may infer by my presence at Council yet again, this issue is not going away until you decide to resolve things by stopping your discriminatory practices and compensating Bonus card users appropriately. And the topic will get increasingly embarrassing the closer we get to the next elections, so I would encourage you to roll back the discriminatory price increase as soon as possible.

So, I ask again:

Can you tell me how many times people with Bonus Cards have been charged £2 after 8pm during weekdays and after 4pm at weekends since the prices were raised in April?

At the meeting Mr Gibson concluded by offering his experience and services to engage with Fusion Lifestyle regarding the IT system.

Background

The 2018/19 increases for the Bonus Card concession increases were buried in the middle of an Appendix 7 of the budget document voted through by Council in February.

The Council offers a concessionary rate, called a Bonus card, for a range of people in need, including the disabled and their carers and different types of income support. The admission price for these concessions was increased by 53.85% from £1.30 to £2.00 at the start of April, with no advance warning, and discriminates against the disabled and those on benefits who now have to find extra money in order to be able to participate in exercise. The pricing shown on the Fusion websites is in line with the Budget appendix, but not what people are being charged.

Community Services Fees & Charges 2018/19

	2017/18 Charge £	2018/19 Charge £	Increase/ (Decrease) £	Increase/ (Decrease) %
Leisure Centres				
Standard rated & inclusive of VAT				
ALL THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUSIVE TO ACTIVE AND CHOICE MEMBERSHIP CARD HOLDERS				
Adult				
Casual Swimming	4.60	4.70	0.10	2.17
Family Swim Ticket	11.80	12.10	0.30	2.54
Hinksey Swimming	6.20	6.40	0.20	3.23
Hinksey Family Swim Ticket	18.40	18.90	0.50	2.72
Hinksey (early/late)	4.60	4.70	0.10	2.17
Hinksey Family Swim Ticket (early/late)	11.80	12.10	0.30	2.54
Sauna & Swim (LPLC)	7.80	8.00	0.20	2.56
Water Workout	6.50	6.70	0.20	3.08
Badminton (per person)	3.70	3.80	0.10	2.70
Squash (per person)	4.20	4.30	0.10	2.38
U17/Over 60s/ Student				
Casual Swimming	2.90	3.00	0.10	3.45
Hinksey Swimming	4.10	4.20	0.10	2.44
Hinksey (early/late)	2.90	3.00	0.10	3.45
Sauna & Swim (LPLC)	4.90	5.00	0.10	2.04
Water Workout	4.30	4.40	0.10	2.33
Badminton (per person)	2.70	2.80	0.10	3.70
Squash (per person)	2.80	2.90	0.10	3.57
Bonus Concessionary*				
Casual Swimming (Off peak)	1.30	1.50	0.20	15.38
Casual Swimming (Peak)	1.30	2.00	0.70	53.85
Hinksey Swimming (Off peak)	1.30	1.50	0.20	15.38
Hinksey Swimming (Peak)	1.30	2.00	0.70	53.85
Hinksey (early/late)	1.30	1.50	0.20	15.38
Sauna & Swim @ LPLC	2.50	2.80	0.30	12.00
Water Workout (Off peak)	1.30	1.50	0.20	15.38
Water Workout (Peak)	1.30	2.00	0.70	53.85
Badminton (Off peak per person)	1.30	1.50	0.20	15.38
Badminton (Peak per person)	1.30	2.00	0.70	53.85
Squash (Off peak per person)	1.30	1.50	0.20	15.38
Squash (Peak per person)	1.30	2.00	0.70	53.85

Written Response from Councillor L Smith

We undertake regular benchmarking with other local authority areas and this shows that the bonus scheme is comparatively low cost. The benchmarking has also shown that off peak pricing is a common practice to try and encourage more usage at quieter times.

We very much value all of our customers, actively promote all of the membership schemes including the bonus card and welcome all user feedback.

In light of Mr Gibson's concerns about overcharging, the system at the Ferry Centre system has been thoroughly investigated by the Council's leisure operator Fusion Lifestyle. We would encourage customers who think they may have been overcharged or have an issue with their bonus or membership cards to contact a member of the Fusion team at the facility of their choice so that the issue can be resolved.

Supplementary response from Councillor L Smith at the meeting

Thank you for the offer of assistance.

Since you last came to talk to us Fusion Lifestyle have informed me that there are some technical anomalies with a small number of cards. They will aim to rectify those anomalies as soon as possible. In the meantime anyone who thinks they have been overcharged should speak to the Duty Manager at the centre and get an immediate

refund. If the matter isn't resolved to their satisfaction at the centre they should contact the Leisure & Performance Manager at the City Council.

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