

25. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

(1) **Democratic Structures for Oxford City Council** – (Proposer – Councillor Nuala Young, seconder David Williams)

Oxford City Council recognises that the recent changes to decision making have been undemocratic and would seek (as made possible under the Localism Act) to return to a more open and fair system of local government that encourages participation and engagement by the Community.

The Council will.

- (1) No longer invest powers in a single 'Strong Leader'. Such powers will be devolved amongst service committees focused on specific Council functions.
- (2) Return to decision making focused on all party representative committees reflecting the political balance on the Council with committees reflecting service delivery with a central policy committee to set strategic objectives.
- (3) Restore the Area Committees with their officer support, devolved budget and planning powers along with other additional devolved powers.
- (4) The Council will return to a six week cycle with 8 meetings a year one of which will be a distinct budget setting Council.
- (5) Restore the duty on planning officers to inform those residents adjacent to and near to a proposed planning allocation.

A report on the Constitutional Changes required to implement these changes, to be brought to the present City Executive Board for implementation in the autumn period.

(2) **Temple Cowley Pools** – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconder Nuala Young)

Given the escalating cost of the project to build a new swimming Pool at Blackbird Leys, the growing public opposition to the proposal and the pending legal actions against the scheme, this Council will abandon the proposed development and will commence the refurbishment of Temple Cowley Pools and the existing Blackbird Leys pool.

The estimated cost of refurbishment and contract withdrawal being taken from the capital allocation set aside for the building of the proposed new pool at Blackbird Leys.

(3) **Ecocide** – (Proposer – Councillor Matt Morton, seconder Nuala Young)

The International Criminal Court was formed in 2002 to prosecute individuals for breaches of 4 Crimes against Peace. They are: Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Crimes of Aggression. Ecocide has been proposed as the missing 5th crime against peace.

There is a proposed amendment, which if accepted will add Ecocide as a crime against peace. This will change the way the earth is exploited and allow big business to avoid harmful practice and still fulfill their legal obligations to shareholders. In order to pass a 2/3rd majority is needed, and the UK could play a major role in tipping the balance.

This council believes that this amendment is an important step in ensuring the future sustainability of Oxford city and the global environment. We ask the executive to contact the 2 MP's for Oxford to ask them to support the UK diplomatic service in supporting this amendment in the UN.

(4) **Boating Community** – (Proposer – Councillor Matt Morton, seconder David Williams)

The boating community and residential boaters are an integral part of the character of the City of Oxford yet, in a time of growing housing need, their welfare is often overlooked in City provision.

In light of this situation, Council resolves:

- (1) to re-direct the £44,000 allocated in the recent budget for an extra riverbank enforcement officer to a new welfare and support worker post dedicated to supporting residential boat dwellers.
- (2) that the welfare and support worker post will include an understanding of the needs and challenges residential boat dwellers face and what support is available to them.

(5) **Times Safer Cycling Campaigng** – (Proposer – Councillor Val Smith)

This Council supports the Times newspaper safer cycling campaign.

(6) **NHS PFI Loan Programme** – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Nuala Young)

The NHS in Oxfordshire faces years of financial pressure which will inevitably affect the quality of health care for the people of Oxfordshire.

One of the larger elements of pressure comes from the need for Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust to pay at least £53 million per years to the owners of its PFI facilities. PFI paymentst are inflated by the profits taken by the owners and the very higher interest rates required from private companies compared to public entities such as local councils.

Northumberland County Council, have recently provided a loan to Northumbria Healthcare Trust to secure savings from its PFI contracts and to help buy out part of the contractual obligations. The Government, although accepting that PFI deals are a crippling burden on local Health Carer Trusts, would appear to be making no provision to buy out PFI contracts or ease the burden on NHS Trusts. In view of this fact Oxford City Council would seek to investigate in conjunction with the County Council and other District Council if it could use its investment portfolio to formulate a loan scheme that would reflect the Northumbrian NHS investment programme.

This City Council therefore requests that the CEB appoint a working Party of appropriate members and officers to investigate with colleagues from the County Council and Oxford University Hospitals Trust, the potential for savings to be made through provision of a loan support investment package funded by the Oxfordshire local authorities to ease PFI burdens but still return a reasonable dividend to local council coffers.

(7) Scrutiny – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Dick Wolff)

Oxford City Council, recognising that all of its members have been elected to play an active part in the formation and implementation of Council policies, believes that Scrutiny is an important part of the democratic process. This is especially true now that one-person committees have been introduced, extra powers given to the Council Leader and that decision-making has been concentrated in the hands of a small group of majority party councillors, thereby distancing 'backbench' and opposition councillors from discussion and decision-making. Now that Area Committees have been abolished and many powers such as planning centralised in fewer committees dominated by the majority party, it is especially important to ensure that a robust and effective system is in place for assessing Council performance across the whole city (not just those parts represented by the majority party), and for monitoring the impact of existing and proposed Council policies.

With this clear democratic need made more obvious by the continued centralization it is most important to resist moves to reduce the number, briefs and powers of the already reduced in number Scrutiny Committees and to make a commitment that this Council will maintain at least two existing major scrutiny panels with the present criteria for review undiminished along with the 'call in' principle for ward spend allocations, planning decisions and single members 'committees'.

(8) Oxford Cycle City Project – (Proposer – Councillor Graham Jones, seconder Councillor Jean Fooks)

This council applauds the work already done by officers and stakeholders on the Oxford Cycle City project;

asks officers to refine further the prioritised list of schemes through consultation with local communities and ward councillors as well as the excellent involvement of organisations such as Cyclox and Sustrans – not least on local infrastructure;

welcomes the many positive ideas set out in a letter to local authorities by the Cycling Minister, Norman Baker, and the moneys for encouraging and improving cycling earmarked by the Coalition government;

urges the inclusion of a city-centre cycle hub and more cycle stands further up the list of priorities;

notes the recent unanimous vote of the county council to work closely with districts on these issues;

and calls on the County Council, in consultation with Cyclox and the City Council, to take measures to implement in Oxford *The Times* eight-point plan for making "Cities fit for Cycling", and to respond to cyclists' concerns in relation to shared space proposals such as those for Frideswide Square.

(9) Council Estate Management – (Proposer – councillor Stuart McCready, seconder Councillor Jean Fooks)

Up until the start of the 2011/12 financial year, twelve estate managers provided a landlord presence that reached all Council housing in Oxford. The estate manager visited frequently and kept a constant pro-active eye out for problems and knew which department had the solutions. Tenants knew who their estate manager was and could depend on getting a reply when they asked their estate manager to visit, see what a given problem was, and provide advice, help and advocacy in identifying and dealing with the City departments that had the solutions.

For the past year we have had only five estate managers for the whole City, and the emphasis has been on tenants identifying and contacting for themselves the specialist team most likely to help with a given problem - and then they cannot be sure of dealing with the same person twice in a row. This has meant that tenants are faced with a more fragmented, and consequently less effective, landlord service. There is a sense on some estates that cases that were progressing when an estate manager was on the case have stalled and even very simple matters sometimes seem a bewildering challenge to get seen to.

The Council therefore requests officers to investigate restructuring the landlord function to ensure that every tenant has a single familiar officer to whom they can reliably turn for a home visit and advice when they need help or service from the Housing Department.

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