

**Council Motion - Medical Research – Laboratory, South Parks Road**

Councillor Huzzey, seconded by Councillor Rundle moved the following Motion on Notice:-

"This Council notes that:-

- Disruption has affected Oxford citizens living and/or working near South Parks Road, arising from the construction by the University of Oxford of a new medical research facility there.
- Everybody in Oxford has a fundamental right to work and to go about their daily business free of any and all intimidation.
- Animal experiments for medical research are legal, and believes that there is a compelling case for them in cases where there is a clear benefit to medicine that will sustain human life or ease human suffering.
- Peaceful and non-intimidatory protest is the cornerstone of a liberal democracy, and should never be obscured by the passion on either side of a debate.

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- (a) re-assert the City's belief in the right of peaceful and non-intimidatory protest by those of all shades of opinion on the future of medical research;
- (b) condemn without reservation any and all intimidation connected with the construction of this research building: threats of violence against human beings and/or property have no part in legitimate debate;
- (c) continue to liaise with the Policing Board to guarantee that enforcement of the law is proportionate, and that officers are properly supported where the threat of violence exists.

This Council also asks the Executive Board – in keeping with the traditions of free and open debate in the City – to report back on practical ways in which the Council can encourage debate and discussion on the facts and issues surrounding animal medical research."

Councillor McManners moved an amendment to the Motion to delete Parts (a) and (b) and replace them with the following:-

- “(a) Offer on behalf of the City of Oxford clear support for the principle of the construction of a medical laboratory in Oxford, which can use legitimate animal testing if necessary. This is on the progressive grounds that the facility will be to the benefit of humanity, will help alleviate the suffering of the sick, and be of benefit to the people of Oxford;
- (b) Show solidarity with the workers, scientists and students involved in the laboratory. This Council re-affirms the right to protest in a democratic society and to differ in opinion, but also the duty to respect the rights of those who disagree and the rights of others to work and live free of intimidation, threats and verbal abuse. It condemns those not respecting these rights.”

Before the amendment was seconded, Councillor Huzzey with the agreement of his seconder and Council accepted the amendment into the substantive Motion.

Councillor Sellwood seconded by Councillor Simmons moved an amendment to delete the words “or ease human suffering” from the end of the third bullet point but this was not carried, 12 members voting in favour and 26 members voting against. The substantive Motion as amended was then voted upon and this was carried, 27 members voting in favour, one member voting against with 11 abstentions.

The Motion adopted by Council reads as follows:-

“This Council notes that:-

- Disruption has affected Oxford citizens living and/or working near South Parks Road, arising from the construction by the University of Oxford of a new medical research facility there.
- Everybody in Oxford has a fundamental right to work and to go about their daily business free of any and all intimidation.
- Animal experiments for medical research are legal, and believes that there is a compelling case for them in cases where there is a clear benefit to medicine that will sustain human life or ease human suffering.
- Peaceful and non-intimidatory protest is the cornerstone of a liberal democracy, and should never be obscured by the passion on either side of a debate.

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- (a) offer on behalf of the City of Oxford clear support for the principle of the construction of a medical laboratory in Oxford, which can use legitimate animal testing if necessary. This is on the progressive grounds that the facility will be to the benefit of humanity, will help alleviate the suffering of the sick, and be of benefit to the people of Oxford;
- (b) show solidarity with the workers, scientists and students involved in the laboratory. This Council re-affirms the right to protest in a democratic society and to differ in opinion, but also the duty to respect the rights of those who disagree and the rights of others to work and live free of intimidation, threats and verbal abuse. It condemns those not respecting these rights;
- (c) continue to liaise with the Policing Board to guarantee that enforcement of the law is proportionate, and that officers are properly supported where the threat of violence exists.

This Council also asks the Executive Board – in keeping with the traditions of free and open debate in the City – to report back on practical ways in which the Council can encourage debate and discussion on the facts and issues surrounding animal medical research.”

It is recommended that this motion be referred to the Community Scrutiny Committee for comment.