

# Briefing Note Republished after the meeting

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## Council

Date: **Monday 25 November 2019**

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Time: **5.00 pm**

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Place: **Council Chamber - Oxford Town Hall**

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For any further information please contact:

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This briefing note forms part of the Council agenda papers and should be read alongside these.

The Council meeting is available via a webcast. The webcast will be available to view on the City Council's YouTube channel during and after the meeting.

**PART 1 - PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**3 MINUTES**

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 7 October 2019.  
Council is asked to approve the minutes as a correct record.

**Main  
agenda  
pack**

**4 APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

Council is asked to note that the Leader has appointed Councillor John Tanner as the Substitute Member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (Joint Committee).

No other changes notified.

**5 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements by:

1. The Lord Mayor
2. The Sheriff
3. The Leader of the Council (who may with the permission of the Lord Mayor invite other councillors to make announcements)
4. The Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer

**6 PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING**

No addresses or questions.

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

No reports or recommendations from Cabinet

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS 2019**

Councillor Aziz, the Chair of the Standards Committee, will present the report.

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**Recommendation: Council is recommended to:**

1. **approve** the appointment of Chris Ballinger, Andrew Mills-Hicks, Jill McCleery and Osama Raja as the council's independent persons for a term of five years to 30 November 2024; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary arrangements.

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## OFFICER REPORTS

**8 URGENT DECISION REPORT ON HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING (HIF) - OSNEY MEAD INNOVATION QUARTER.**

Councillor Brown, the Leader of the Council, will present the report

**Recommendations: that Council resolves to:**

1. **note** the urgent officer decision taken by the Executive Director (Development) on 31 October 2019 to enter a contract with Homes England to secure £6.088m for infrastructure.
2. **approve the inclusion of a budget of £6.088m in the Council's capital programme for Osney Mead Infrastructure enabling works.**

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**9 COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS PROGRAMME MAY 2020 - MAY 2022**

Councillor Brown, the Leader of the Council, will present the report

**Recommendations: Council is recommended to:**

1. **approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 1 for the council year 2020/21;
2. **approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 2 for the council year 2021/22;
3. **delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme, in the event that there is a decision by Council to change the committee structure or remit which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
4. **delegate authority** to the Head of Law and Governance to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for members, and, in consultation with the Head of Business Improvement, to set meetings of the Appointments Committee and Investigations and Disciplinary Committee (should they be required).

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## QUESTIONS

### 10 QUESTIONS ON CABINET MINUTES

This item has a time limit of 15 minutes.

Councillors may ask the Cabinet Members questions about matters in these minutes:

**10a Minutes of meeting Thursday 3 October 2019 of Cabinet**

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**10b Minutes of meeting Wednesday 9 October 2019 of Cabinet**

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**10c Minutes of meeting Wednesday 13 November 2019 of Cabinet**

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pack**

### 11 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

27 questions on notice from councillors received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules, and responses.

One supplementary question may be asked at the meeting.

**Minutes**

## PART 2 - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SCRUTINY

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

Public addresses and questions to the Leader or other Cabinet member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rules and not related to matters for decision in Part 1 of this agenda.

**Written responses are included where available.**

A total of 45 minutes is available for both public speaking items. Responses are included in this time.

Up to five minutes is available for each public address and up to three minutes for each question.

**Minutes**

### 13 OUTSIDE ORGANISATION/COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS AND QUESTIONS

**13a Outside Organisation report - Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Improvement Board**

Submitted to this meeting on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Healthy Oxford

**Council is invited to note and comment on the report.**

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**14 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee will present this report.

Council is invited to comment on and note the report.

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**PART 3 - MOTIONS REPRESENTING THE CITY**

**15 MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

**This item has a time limit of 60 minutes.**

The full text of motions for debate and substantive amendments sent by councillors to the Head of Law and Governance before 10.00am on Friday 22 November 2019 are in the report at the end of this pack.

Minor technical or limited wording amendments may be submitted during the meeting but must be written down and circulated.

**Council is asked to consider the following motions:**

- a) Setting an Oxford Living Rent (proposed by Councillor Wolff)
- b) Mental Health (proposed by Councillor Bely-Summers, seconded by Councillor Upton)
- c) Kashmir (proposed by Councillor Altaf-Khan)
- d) Long Service Awards (proposed by Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Wolff)
- e) International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (proposed by Councillor Tanner)
- f) Greening the city centre (proposed by Councillor Gant) **[with amendment]**
- g) Tourism Management (proposed by Councillor Wade)

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**16 MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION AND EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any aspects of the preceding agenda items it

will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifying the grounds on which their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Section 15 of the Council's Constitution – sets out the conditions under which the public can be excluded from meetings of the Council)

**THE MAIN AGENDA CONTAINS ALL REPORTS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING**



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**To:** Council

**Date:** 25 November 2019

**Report of:** Monitoring Officer

**Title of Report:** Appointment of Independent Persons 2019 - 2024

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** This report asks Council to approve the appointment of the council's independent persons for a term of five years to 30 November 2024 and to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary arrangements.

**Policy Framework:** N/A

**Recommendation(s):** Council is recommended to approve the appointment of Chris Ballinger, Andrew Mills-Hicks, Jill McCleery and Osama Raja as the council's independent persons for a term of five years to 30 November 2024 and to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary arrangements.

## Introduction and background

1. The Localism Act 2011 ("The Act") (Section 28, subsections (7) and (8)) requires the Council to appoint one or more Independent Persons to assist the Authority in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its members and to act in an advisory capacity to the Monitoring Officer in dealing with code of conduct matters.
2. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 as amended ("The Regulations") require the Council to invite relevant Independent Persons to a Panel (being a committee appointed by the authority under section 102(4) of the Local Government Act 1972) for the purposes of advising the authority on matters relating to dismissal of relevant officers of the authority (the chief executive, the chief finance officer and the monitoring officer).
3. At its meeting on 16 July 2012, the Council appointed Chris Ballinger, Godfrey Cole, Jill McCleery and Ben Simpson as the Council's Independent Persons for five years. In 2017 Council extended those appointments for a further two years to July 2019. The appointment of three of those individuals was further extended to 30 November 2019 to accommodate the completion of the

recruitment exercise. Mr Cole and Mr Simpson chose not to seek re-appointment and the Council has expressed its thanks to them for their contribution as Independent Persons.

### **Recruitment of Independent Persons 2019**

4. There is no prescribed time limit on the terms of office of independent persons and these are therefore within the discretion of the Council.
5. The Monitoring Officer has conducted a formal recruitment exercise for the appointment of Independent Persons based on the following principles:
  - i. The recruitment exercise included an advertisement, application and interview (as required by “the Act”)
  - ii. The interview panel consisted of the Monitoring Officer, the Chair of the Standards Committee and one opposition member from the Standards Committee
  - iii. The term of appointment is recommended to be for 5 years
  - iv. The Independent Person “job description” approved by the Monitoring Officer was expanded to include considering evidence and advising Council on the course of action for the Disciplinary Committee to follow whenever there is the prospect of dismissal of a statutory officer
  - v. The statutory restrictions on eligibility were applied<sup>1</sup>
  - vi. Applications from an existing Independent Person were considered on their merits
  - vii. The appointments are to be confirmed at Full Council and require a positive vote by a majority of councillors (as required by “the Act”)
6. The Council may appoint as many Independent Persons as it deems appropriate. A cohort of four to six individuals was proposed as there is a balance to be struck between having a sufficient number to ensure availability at short notice with building up a level of knowledge and experience.
7. Four applications were received and interviews took place on 1 and 10 October 2019 with a view to appointing up to four Independent Persons. The interview panel comprised the Monitoring Officer, the Chair of the Standards Committee, Councillor Shaista Aziz and one opposition member of the Standards Committee, Councillor Mike Gotch.

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<sup>1</sup> A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person if they are, or have been, at any time in the preceding five years:

- a) A member, co-opted member or officer of Oxford City Council; or
- b) A member, co-opted member or officer of one of the four parish councils (Blackbird Leys, Littlemore, Old Marston and Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish Councils); or
- c) A relative or close friend of such persons

8. The interview panel concluded that the following four individuals should be recommended to Council for appointment as an Independent Person:
- Chris Ballinger (re-appointment)
  - Andrew Mills-Hicks (new appointment)
  - Jill McCleery (re-appointment)
  - Osama Raja (new appointment)

**Legal implications**

9. The legal implications are set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 and explained in the body of the report.
10. The Act requires that appointments are approved by a positive vote by a majority of members of the authority.

**Financial implications**

11. The recruitment of Independent Persons in 2019 carries a modest financial burden which will be accommodated in the 2019/20 Member Support budget. The Council does not pay its Independent Persons.

**Risk management**

12. Failing to appoint an Independent Person would place the Council in breach of its statutory duty under “the Act” and prevent the Monitoring Officer from dealing with complaints in accordance with the Council’s code of conduct complaints procedure. In addition in the event of there being a need to consider dismissal of a relevant officer and the Council not having appointed at least two Independent Persons the Council would be required to approach another local authority to seek to invite their appointed Independent Persons to form part of a Panel in accordance with the Regulations.

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**To:** Council

**Date:** 25 November 2019

**Title of Report:** **Motions and amendments received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.17**

Councillors are asked to debate and reach conclusions on the motions and amendment listed below in accordance with the Council's rules for debate.

The Constitution permits an hour for debate of these motions.

## Introduction

This document sets out motions received by the Head of Law and Governance in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.17 by the deadline of 1.00pm on Wednesday 13 November 2019 as amended by the proposers.

All substantive amendments sent by councillors to the Head of Law and Governance by publication of the briefing note are also included below.

Unfamiliar terms may be explained in the glossary or in footnotes.

**Motions will be taken in turn from the Green, Labour, and Liberal Democrat groups in that order.**

## Motions

- (a) Setting an Oxford Living Rent (proposed by Councillor Wolff)
- (b) Mental Health (proposed by Councillor Bely-Summers, seconded by Councillor Upton)
- (c) Kashmir (proposed by Councillor Altaf-Khan)
- (d) Long Service Awards (proposed by Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Wolff)
- (e) International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (proposed by Councillor Tanner)
- (f) Greening the city centre (proposed by Councillor Gant) **[with amendment]**
- (g) Tourism Management (proposed by Councillor Wade)

## **(a) Setting an Oxford Living Rent (proposed by Councillor Wolff)**

### Green member motion

This Council notes

- 1) the high cost of rent within the private rented sector within the City;
- 2) that it has limited influence on the private rented sector rental values;
- 3) that it has a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act to do what it can to prevent homelessness including helping those who are not in priority need from losing their home;
- 4) the success of the Oxford Living Wage campaign in raising awareness of low pay and encouraging more employers to pay a living wage;
- 5) that the Mayor of London has set and published benchmark London Living Rent levels for every neighbourhood in the capital. These are based on a third of average local household incomes and adjusted for the number of bedrooms in each home.

**Council therefore agrees to:**

- 1) ask Cabinet to commission a report to explore the idea of setting and publishing an annual 'Oxford Living Rent' for the private rented sector with a view to exerting influence on the rental market within Oxford.**
- 2) write to the incoming Government after 12 December asking for the power to establish and enforce local rent controls**

The Oxford Living Rent should be calculated using a methodology that utilises existing, annually published data using research from organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation who have studied this in some detail.

This motion does not prescribe the method to be used but notes that various options exist and should be evaluated for their relevance to Oxford and their alignment with the values of this Council.

## **(b) Mental Health (proposed by Councillor Bely-Summers, seconded by Councillor Upton)**

### Labour member motion

The 2012 Health and Social Care Act opened the NHS to private companies, allowing them to bid for big contracts and sue the NHS if they didn't get it.

The NHS is being dismantled piece by piece. This is compounded by the longest spell of austerity cuts in living memory and a lower investment in health compared to other EU countries.

Oxfordshire CCG is a serial under-funder of Mental Health services. It persistently spends well below the national average figure of 13.9%. For the people in Oxford it means rationing and difficulty accessing services for those who need it at a time when public awareness of mental illness is increasing and the rate of Oxfordshire pupils suffering from mental health problems tops national average (see Oxford Mail 8/10/19).

Unite which represents 100,000 members in the Health service have pointed out that psychological therapies have lost about 90% of their most senior clinicians since 2007 and that the trend needs to be reversed to prevent mentally ill people falling through the care net. Consultant psychology posts in adult psychology have recently been reduced

by a third. The expectation is that less qualified staff will do more complex work with people who have serious mental health problems.

Oxfordshire Unison Health branch has highlighted the following:

- a shortage of Mental Health nurses in psychiatric wards.
- the recruitment and retention crisis being made worse by high cost of living in Oxfordshire.
- overcrowded wards are creating stressful environments, hampering recovery.
- the lack of decent housing and supportive placements prevents rapid discharge.
- the lack of adequate community services to support people in crisis leading to readmission.

Put under pressure from politicians, local people, councillors and campaign groups , the county council reversed its decision over a £1.6 million cut in the Mental Health budget earlier this year but we will need to do much more just to stand still as our population grows.

**Therefore**

- 1) We call on the Leader of the City Council to write to the Secretary of State to urge them to increase Mental Health funding to meet national target and address the needs of the population.**
- 2) We call on the Systems Leaders Group for the Buckingham, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) to ensure they will consult the local population on decisions made regarding Mental Health provision.**
- 3) We request a clear line of accountability to be outlined by BOB ICS to ensure that the public has confidence in its decisions.**

### **(c) Kashmir (proposed by Councillor Altaf Khan**

#### Liberal Democrat member motion

This Council supports the calls of the Oxford Kashmiri/Pakistani community to take notice of the humanitarian crisis intensified since 5th August 2019 when the Indian government revoked Article 370 of the Constitution thus abrogating the special status granted to Kashmir.

#### **This Council notes that:**

- eight million people in the valley of Kashmir are completely disconnected from the rest of the world due to curfew imposed by the Indian government;
- the enforced disappearances of civilians, the state-endorsed sexual violence of women by armed forces and the overall prevalence of human rights violations in the region worsens;
- the consequences of the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A along with the lockdown is aimed to demolish Kashmiri identity and bring about a demographic change against the wished of the people of Kashmir;
- thousands of Kashmiris including political leaders, both pro-freedom and mainstream, have been imprisoned without lawful justification;
- the number of children abducted from their homes is estimated by Indian human rights activists is about 13,000;
- the ongoing communications black-out is causing disruption for medical agencies and distress for the families.

**This Council affirms that:**

Jammu and Kashmir is a UN mandated disputed territory and the people of Kashmir must be given the right to self-determination as provided by the UN charter and UN resolutions.

It endorses the UN High Commissioners' demand to send a fact-finding Mission to Kashmir as demanded in OHCHR reports of June 2018 and July 2019.

**This Council resolves:**

- 1) That the international community including our incoming Government should ask the Government of India to lift all restrictions, ensure restoration of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and allow access to all aid agencies and international observers to obtain an independent estimate of this crisis situation.
- 2) The global community through the United Nations should invoke preventative diplomacy to prevent a military conflict between India and Pakistan in the interests of international peace and security and to ensure that the curfew enforced since 5th August should be lifted to guarantee the security and even the lives of the Kashmiri people.
- 3) To ask group leaders to write jointly to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Oxford's incoming MPs and MEPs supporting this motion.

**This Council acknowledges** the brave and principled work of Oxford's Kashmiri/Pakistani community and wider diaspora to push for accountability over the many decades of human rights violations and crimes against the Kashmiri people by the Government of India;

**and asks** the Leader/Chief Executive of the Council to write to the relevant U.K. Government Ministers in the Home and Foreign Offices, and to the city's incoming MPs, asking:

- 1) The UK government to condemn the use of force, rape and other human rights violations of the Kashmiris.
- 2) The Home Office to provide sanctuary to Kashmiri people seeking safety from the oppressive regime in Indian Occupied Kashmir.
- 3) The city's MPs to write appropriate letters to the Home Office and Foreign Office representing the demands set out in this motion.

**(d) Long Service Awards (proposed by Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Wolff)**Green member motion

I recently had the pleasure of presenting the Long Service Awards to City Council staff. The City Council only gives out an award after 25 years of service. It was suggested that additional awards could be considered for shorter periods of service; say, marking 5 and 10 years of service to the Council.

**This Council asks the Cabinet to explore awards for shorter periods and to consider what gift might be appropriate.**

## **(e) International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (proposed by Councillor Tanner)**

### Labour member motion

Oxford City Council has been a long-standing member of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) which has been working for over three decades to promote multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Oxford City Council is particularly concerned about the huge cost to the taxpayer of nuclear weapons, the risk posed by the regular transport of nuclear weapons on Oxfordshire's roads and the continuing threat of nuclear war.

NFLA has worked with Mayors for Peace and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to promote the International Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Over two thirds (122) of United Nations member states have agreed the TPNW.

Council regrets that the Governments of the existing nuclear weapon states, including the UK, refuse to support the Treaty. Council fully supports the TPNW as one of the most effective ways to bring about long-term and verifiable multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Oxford City Council calls on the United Kingdom Government to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- Cancelling the programme to replace its entire Trident nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons;
- Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to reduce and then eliminate their nuclear arsenals by supporting both the Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons and the 'Good Faith' Protocols within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

**Oxford City Council asks the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the incoming UK Government and Oxford's newly elected MPs to inform them of this resolution and urge them to take appropriate action.**

*Note: Similar resolutions have been agreed by Manchester City Council and Renfrewshire Council. The TPNW was agreed at the UN by 122 countries (including the Republic of Ireland) in July 2017 and is currently being ratified, a process that is expected to conclude in 2019.*

## **(f) Greening the city centre (proposed by Councillor Gant)**

### Liberal Democrat member motion

#### **Original text**

Council believes that among the many other aspects of the Climate Emergency, the one which falls most easily within its own remit is nature-based solutions. Council notes recent academic work which shows that carefully located planting can have a significant impact on heat-stress, carbon sequestration, waterflow regulation and air quality (especially at the most polluted points in cities). Equally, Council notes studies which indicate the enormous benefits to mental health and wellbeing of exposure to green infrastructure and natural colours.

Council acknowledges the considerable degradation of the city centre, largely as a result of the opening of the Westgate Centre

**Council therefore asks officers to:**

- 1) develop a comprehensive scheme for suitable, sustainable urban planting, considering all relevant factors;
- 2) work up a proposal for green walls, such as those widely seen in other major European city centres, including on its own buildings where appropriate;
- 3) make a plan for the “greening” of the city centre, principally (but not limited to) in Queen Street, Cornmarket and George Street, in partnership with all other stakeholders, including window-boxes and rooftop planting;
- 4) factor these proposals into all other relevant work including preparations for the budget.

**Amendment proposed by Councillor Hayes, seconded by Councillor Tanner**

- Struck- through text to be deleted, italic text to be inserted:

Council believes that among the many other aspects of the Climate Emergency, ~~the~~ one which falls *most easily* within its own remit is nature-based solutions. Council notes *the emphasis given to the issue by Oxford’s Citizens’ Assembly and recent academic work* which shows that carefully located planting can have a significant impact on heat-stress, carbon sequestration, waterflow regulation and air quality (especially at the most polluted points in cities). Equally, Council notes studies which indicate the enormous benefits to mental health and wellbeing of exposure to green infrastructure and natural colours.

~~Council acknowledges the considerable degradation of the city centre, largely as a result of the opening of the Westgate Centre~~

*Council thanks Oxford Direct Services for working with community groups to plant 2000 new trees and shrubs across Oxford’s urban forest during Tree Week, to improve the city’s treescape and benefit the environment.*

Council therefore asks *the Leader to ensure that* officers:

- 1) *continue to* develop a comprehensive scheme for suitable, sustainable urban planting, considering all relevant factors;
- 2) *ensure nature-based solutions to climate breakdown are also solutions to the problems of congestion and transportation emissions by planting trees and biodiversity to close roads and create traffic-free streets.*
- 3) work up a proposal for green walls, such as those widely seen in other major European city centres, including on its own buildings where appropriate, *and make applications for external funding for such a purpose;*
- 4) make a plan for the “greening” of the city centre, principally (but not limited to) in Queen Street, Cornmarket and George Street, in partnership with all other stakeholders, including window-boxes and rooftop planting, *as part of its wider partnership working;*
- 5) *continue to* factor ~~these proposals~~ *nature-based solutions* into all other relevant work including preparations for the budget.

**The amended motion would then read:**

Council believes that among the many other aspects of the Climate Emergency, one which falls within its own remit is nature-based solutions. Council notes *the emphasis given to the issue by Oxford's Citizens' Assembly and recent academic work which shows that carefully located planting can have a significant impact on heat-stress, carbon sequestration, waterflow regulation and air quality (especially at the most polluted points in cities)*. Equally, Council notes studies which indicate the enormous benefits to mental health and wellbeing of exposure to green infrastructure and natural colours.

*Council thanks Oxford Direct Services for working with community groups to plant 2000 new trees and shrubs across Oxford's urban forest during Tree Week, to improve the city's treescape and benefit the environment.*

**Council therefore asks *the Leader to ensure that officers:***

- 1) *continue to develop a comprehensive scheme for suitable, sustainable urban planting, considering all relevant factors;*
- 2) *ensure nature-based solutions to climate breakdown are also solutions to the problems of congestion and transportation emissions by planting trees and biodiversity to close roads and create traffic-free streets.*
- 3) *work up a proposal for green walls, such as those widely seen in other major European city centres, including on its own buildings where appropriate, and make applications for external funding for such a purpose;*
- 4) *make a plan for the "greening" of the city centre, principally (but not limited to) in Queen Street, Cornmarket and George Street, in partnership with all other stakeholders, including window-boxes and rooftop planting, as part of its wider partnership working;*
- 5) *continue to factor nature-based solutions into all other relevant work including preparations for the budget.*

## **(g) Tourism Management (proposed by Councillor Wade)**

### Liberal Democrat member motion

This Council has cut its £173K annual contribution (part grant/ part use of property) to Experience Oxfordshire (EO) by £20K from April 2019; by £25K from April 2020; and, from April 2021, EO will receive no grant. It may also lose its City owned base in Broad Street in 2021, which houses the Visitor Information Centre and EO's offices. Oxford had nearly nine million tourists last year, half a million of whom used the Centre. 15,000 Oxfordshire residents work in the tourist trade.

In February EO won Destination Marketing Company of the Year award, in face of competition from cities with multi-million-pound budgets, and has consistently been praised for punching above its weight despite limited budgets. At the same time as the City Council grant is being slashed to zero, EO will be working flat out to ensure that Oxford is chosen as part of one of the five 'tourist zones' in the new Government Tourism Sector Deal of 28 June. There could be a boost from Government funding, a tourist data hub, and thousands of new apprenticeships.

The City expects EO to take on this new challenge, as well as its existing workload.

Experience Oxfordshire has transformed into a much more commercial business model to help deliver on the promotional aspects, whilst still working to not for profit principles and has attracted significant private sector support. However, EO will need continued Local Authority support to continue to provide destination management and marketing services.

This Council recognised the importance of tourism to Oxford's economy by establishing a Tourist Management Review Group. Its recommendations were responded to by the Cabinet Member on 29 May 2019. These numbered responses are referenced in the proposals below.

**Council therefore asks the Leader to work with officers to explore funding to:**

- 1) Support EO's bid to make Oxford one of the UK's 5 'tourist zones.
- 2) Develop a shared vision for tourism in Oxford with EO, the Universities and businesses, working to EO's ambition statement priorities (Rec1)
- 3) Discuss commissioning services from EO as a possible way of providing continued funding to EO and ensure that the Council continues to provide business support in this area. (Rec3)
- 4) Provide an appropriate officer leading on tourism for the Council to work closely with EO to avoid an 'unsustainable workload' on the officers (Rec5)
- 5) Discuss with EO and Oxfordshire County Council what information they have and need to research on tourist coaches e.g. number and movements (Rec10)
- 6) Partner with EO in identifying the digital provision of apps and tourism products (Rec12)
- 7) Partner with EO and Oxfordshire CC to make the case for the Discover England Fund to continue beyond 2019 (Rec13)
- 8) Explore, primarily through the Events Team, closer working with EO and Oxfordshire CC on developing an events strategy (Rec14)
- 9) Support Experience Oxfordshire through a continued finance arrangement for at least an additional 5-year period to enable the organisation to continue delivery of services and become more sustainable.