

COUNCIL

Monday 19 December 2011

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Benjamin (Lord Mayor), Armitage (Deputy Lord Mayor), Fooks (Sheriff), Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Bance, Baxter, Brett, Brown, Brundin, Campbell, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Craft, Darke, Goddard, Gotch, Hazell, Jones, Keen, Khan, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, McCready, McManners, Mills, Morton, Pressel, Price, Pyle, Rowley, Royce, Rundle, Sanders, Seamons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Timbs, Turner, Van Nooijen, Wilkinson, Williams, Wolff and Young.

53. MINUTES

Council resolved to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 10 October 2011.

54. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Lord Mayor following a request asked Council if it would agree to the order of business being changed so that the following agenda items were taken earlier in the proceedings:

Agenda item 19 – Horse Drawn Carriages – Making of Byelaws

Agenda item 20 – Designation of Streets for Street Trading

Agenda item 21 – Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD) – Proposed submission Document

Agenda item 22 – Barton Area Action Plan – Proposed Submission Draft

Agenda item 23 – Setting of the Council Tax Base 2012/13

Council agreed to change the order of business.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors declared interests as follows:

- (1) Councillor Van Coulter declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Addresses by the public – Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was graduate and continuing resident of Ruskin College. He left the meeting when the address took place. (Minute 62 refers).
- (2) Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Addresses by the public – Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the

Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a former student of Ruskin College. (Minute 62 refers).

- (3) Councillor Susanna Pressel declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Addresses by the public – Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as she was a City Council appointed representative on Ruskin College. (Minute 62 refers).
- (4) Councillor Mike Rowley declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Addresses by the public – Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a former student of Ruskin College. (Minute 62 refers).
- (5) Councillor Clark Brundin declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Addresses by the public – Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a City Council appointed representative on Ruskin College. (Minutes 62 refers).
- (6) Councillor Mary Clarkson declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Addresses by the public – Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as she lived close to Ruskin Fields. (Minute 62 refers).
- (7) Councillor Sajjad Malik declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion (5) Business Rate Concessions) as he owned a business in Oxford. (Minute 77 refers).
- (8) Councillor Nuala Young declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion 6 – Language Schools) as she had in the past given language tours. (Minute 77 refers).
- (9) Councillor Mark Mills declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion (8) Health and Care Bill) as his parents were both employees of the National Health Service. (Minute 77 refers).
- (10) Councillor Beverley Hazell declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion (8) Health and Care Bill) as her husband was an employee of the National Health Service. (Minute 77 refers).
- (11) Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion (8) Health and Care Bill) as he was an employee of the National Health Service. (Minute 77 refers).
- 12) Councillor David Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion (10) (Feed in Tariff) and Motion (11) (Cut to Feed-In Tariff) as he had recently installed solar panels at his property. (Minute 77 refers).
- (13) Councillor Elise Benjamin declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Motions on Notice – Motion (10) (Feed in Tariff) and Motion (11) (Cut to

Feed-In Tariff) as she had solar panels installed at her property. (Minute 77 refers).

- (14) Councillor Nuala Young declared a personal interest in agenda item 19 (Horse Drawn Carriages – Making of By-Laws) as she was involved in the tourist trade. (Minute 66 refers)
- (15) Councillor Mohammed Abbasi declared a personal interest in agenda item 19 (Horse Drawn Carriages – Making of By-Laws) as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade. (Minute 66 refers).
- (16) Councillor Shah Jahan Khan declared a personal interest in agenda item 19 (Horse Drawn Carriages – Making of By-Laws) as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade. (Minute 66 refers).
- (17) Councillor Sajjad Malik declared a personal interest in agenda item 19 (Horse Drawn Carriages – Making of By-Laws) as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade. (Minute 66 refers).
- (18) Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan declared a personal interest in agenda item 19 (Horse Drawn Carriages – Making of By-Laws) as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade. (Minute 66 refers).

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from Councillors for the meeting held on 19th December 2011.

57. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

None made.

58. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) Remembrance

Council stood for a minutes silence in remembrance of Sam Timms, former City Councillor for the former Marston Ward from 1992 to 2000, who had recently passed away, and for his Honour Judge Harold Wilson, the former circuit Judge from 1981 to 2011, the resident Judge from 1993 to 2001 and Honorary Recorder between 1993 and 2001.

(2) City Poet – Kate Clanchy

The Lord Mayor welcomed Kate Clanchy, the new City Poet to the meeting and presented her with a bound book of poems and a specially commissioned broach by Sophie Roseman.

Kate Clanchy said that she had been the City Poet since July 2011 and during this time had visited schools and worked with young people to make a poem tree which was used at the Christmas Light Night. She was also being invited back by the schools to do further work with the young people. With regard to adults she had worked with the Marston Poets Group and the Kidlington Festival. An exhibition in the Story Museum was being developed on other worlds and how other worlds came to Oxford. She added that her role was not just to encourage poetry but to encourage reading and writing.

59. SHERIFF'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Sheriff informed Council that she had recently watched the Oxford Lions football team which had only been established in March 2011 at a 5-a-side football match between Bath which the Oxford Lions won 7-6. She said that the club had 100 members both young children and adults and received no financial support from the City Council.

60. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER

None made.

61. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND THE MONITORING OFFICER

None made.

62. ADDRESSES BY THE PUBLIC

Councillor Van Coulter declared a personal interest in Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a graduate and continuing resident of Ruskin College. He left the meeting when the address took place.

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan declared a personal interest in Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a former student of Ruskin College.

Councillor Susanna Pressel declared a personal interest in Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as she was a City Council appointed representative on Ruskin College.

Councillor Mike Rowley declared a personal interest in Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a former student of Ruskin College.

Councillor Clark Brundin declared a personal interest in Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing

DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as he was a City Council appointed representative on Ruskin College.

Councillor Mary Clarkson declared a personal interest in Address 5 from Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan) as she lived close to Ruskin Fields.

Council received 16 requests to address Council (texts of the addresses are appended to these minutes) as follows:

Addresses made in person

- (1) Dene Stansall, Animal Aid – Objection to the proposal to licence a horse-drawn carriage on a designated route in the City centre.
- (2) Niels Paige – Supporting the making of byelaws for horse drawn carriages.
- (3) Doug Robinson – The link road from Northway to New Barton
- (4) Veronica Hurst, Zoe Trail, Clive Hurst – Barton Area Action Plan – In support of Officers recommendations.
- (5) Professor Audrey Mullender, Principal of Ruskin College – Sites and Housing DPD and the Barton Area Action Plan
- (6) Richard English – Sites and Housing DPD
- (7) Jim Smith – Motorcycles and the Oxford Transport Strategy.
- (8) Nigel Gibson – Cutting public services in East Oxford – A Petition
- (9) William Clark – Blackbird Leys Park Town Green application.
- (10) Jane Alexander – Oxford City Council Councillors.

Addresses provided via a written statement

- (11) Mark Pitt – Barton AAP – Barton and Ruskin – Chalk and Cheese- Written statement.
- (12) Peter Shaw – Transforming the A40 Ring Road – Written statement.
- (13) Clive Hurst and Veronica Hurst – Objection to Transforming the A40 Ring Road – Written statement.
- (14) Ed Chipperfield - Forthcoming HMO Licensing Policy – Written Statement.
- (15) Sarah Milliken, Oxford City Committee of the CPRE – Sites and Housing DPD – Written statement.
- (16) Justine Hubbocks, Falcon Close Residents' Association – Comments about East Minchery Farm – Written statement.

While reading her address to Council, Jane Alexander (address number 10) was warned not to continue once she had read her text, as her continued comments could be considered as a personal attack on a Councillor and defamatory. However she continued to make the remarks and as a result the Lord Mayor stopped proceedings and adjourned the meeting at 6.07pm.

Consequently the address by Jane Alexander had been redacted from the recording of the meeting published on the internet.

63. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Three questions were submitted by Members of the public, however due to the time limit allowed for addresses to Council and questions from members of the public being reached, the following questions would receive a written response and the response would be added to the minutes for information.

(1) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Sietske Boeles

Current and future student accommodation units

How confident is the City Council about the soundness of the evidence base for the calculation of the number of current and future student units for Oxford Brookes University by excluding the accommodation needs for those students who live in Oxford but are based at either the Wheatley or Harcourt Hill campus. Have sufficient sites been identified to meet the accommodation needs for those fulltime OBU students who are based at Harcourt and Wheatley campuses but live in Oxford? .

The calculation for the current and future (till 2026) need of Oxford Brookes University's student accommodation is based on the number of full time OBU students based in Oxford and seems to exclude the 5000 or so full time students based outside Oxford's administrative boundaries such as those studying at Harcourt Hill and the Wheatley campus. Presumably the accommodation needs of these students have been excluded because the City Council has no planning controls in relation to developments in other district councils.

Oxford Core Strategy Examination Document C/M5/7 says on page 3 (appended):

Oxford Brookes University-number of students 2006/7

Oxford Brookes University fulltime students	12,690
Full time students based in Oxford	7,075
Units of student accommodation	3,742
Students living outside provided accommodation	3,425
(shortfall 425)	

Percentage of students in provided accommodation 53%
Source AMR 07/08

On the basis of these figures the impact of the cumulative annual growth of 1% in full time students at OBU, based in Oxford, over the remaining plan period would be an increase of 1,472 students and when the shortfall of student accommodation at 2006/7 (425) is added that indicates that at the projected growth of OBU they will need to provide 1,897 more units of accommodation by 2026. Sites seem therefore to have been identified for students based in Oxford only.

OBU has confirmed that substantial numbers of students who are based at Harcourt Hill and Wheatley live in Oxford both in provided accommodation as in the private sector. How are the accommodation needs of these students going to be met?

Written response provided after the meeting as follows:

The question asks about the accommodation needs of Oxford Brookes University students who live in Oxford but are based at either the Wheatley or Harcourt Hill campuses. It is acknowledged that many students who are based at these campuses may live within Oxford City. The figures which Oxford Brookes has provided to the City Council in recent years for the Annual Monitoring Report are based on a postcode analysis of all students who live within Oxford City. These figures are 'campus blind', i.e. they do not distinguish where students study, only where they live. The data presented in the Annual Monitoring Report therefore reflects the accommodation situation of the totality of full-time students at Oxford Brookes, whether they study inside or outside the city boundary.

The question also refers to the City Council's statement to the Core Strategy examination regarding student accommodation, in which a calculation was made of future demand that excluded Oxford Brookes students studying outside of the city boundary.

The reason for this is that the policy being considered at the Core Strategy examination (Policy CS25 in the adopted plan) aims, amongst other things, to ensure that all future increases in student numbers at the two universities as a result of increases in academic/administrative floorspace must be matched by a corresponding increase in purpose-built student accommodation. The policy can only be implemented as and when proposals come forward for new academic floorspace within the city. Since Oxford City Council has no planning control over sites outside the city boundary, the Council's statement to the Core Strategy examination did not deal with students based outside the city.

In practice, some of the accommodation needs of students based at Wheatley and Harcourt Hill may be met outside the city (e.g. a new hall of residence is being built at Harcourt Hill), while some may be met within the city. The Proposed Submission version of the Sites and Housing DPD allocates 24 sites as potentially suitable for new student accommodation, while other sites may come forward through speculative proposals. It is likely that students based at Wheatley or Harcourt Hill may occupy some of this future student accommodation.

If the questioner is concerned that the Core Strategy may have underestimated the future demand for student accommodation by excluding students based at Wheatley and Harcourt Hill, I would add that at the time of preparing the Core Strategy we assumed a continuing 1% annual growth in student numbers at Oxford Brookes. This was the best available information at the time. However, as a consequence of Government changes to the funding of higher education, it is anticipated that student numbers will actually fall a little in the near future. Therefore the figures within the Council's statement to the Core Strategy could now be argued to have overestimated future demand.

In summary, I am confident that we have a sound evidence base for estimating the number of future student units, but this is not an exact science and circumstances may continue to change as a result of factors outside the City Council's control (e.g. the implications of changes in national policy). We will continue to monitor student numbers through the Annual Monitoring Report and this will enable us to assess whether or not our existing planning policies are achieving the desired results.

(2) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Sarah Milliken

Sites and Housing DPD

"The Oxford City Committee of the CPRE requests clarification of what is meant by 'public open space' on new developments – whether this means unrestricted or restricted access open space – and whether these will be given protected open space designation in order to safeguard them from development in the future?"

Written response provided after the meeting as follows:

It is envisaged that access to the new areas of open space would be unrestricted (since they will be public rather than private open space). The precise details about how each area of open space is managed will, of course, need to be determined through discussions with the landowner/developer as part of the planning application process.

Whether or not these areas of open space on new developments are given protected open space status will be a matter for consideration when the relevant saved policies in the Local Plan are reviewed. Clearly they cannot be designated on the Proposals Map until such time as the developments themselves are completed, since the location of the open space will be determined as part of the masterplanning of the relevant site.

(3) Question to the Board Member, Finance and Efficiency (Councillor Ed Turner) from James Rowland

"In December 2011 how many properties were Council Tax exempt due to being solely occupied by full time students (N category). How does this compare with December 2010, 2008 and 2005?"

Written response provided after the meeting as follows:

Numbers of Category N exemptions - Council Tax as at:

Dec 10th 2011	2,339
Dec 11th 2010	2,589
Dec 13th 2008	2,387
Dec 10th 2005	1,845

64. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR OXFORD 2011-2020

Council had before it the following (previously circulated, now appended):

- (a) Minute extract and recommendation from the City Executive Board of 7 December 2011;
- (b) Report of the Head of Environmental Development.

Councillor John Tanner (Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford) seconded by Councillor Bob Price, moved and spoke to the City Executive Board's recommendation.

Following a debate, Council resolved to adopt the Sustainability Strategy as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

65. CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISIONS (MINUTES) AND SINGLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISIONS (MINUTES)

Council had before it (previously circulated, now appended)

City Executive Board decisions (Minutes)

- (1) Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2011
 - (a) Councillor Wilkinson said given that there was a budget proposal to vacate and dispose of the Bury Knowle House office accommodation in 2013/14, she asked if the Leader of the Council could give an assurance that the Administration had no long-term aspiration to discontinue leasing the ground floor of that building to the County Council for the provision of core library services in Headington and the North East of the City. (Minute 46)

In response Councillor Price said that he was happy for the library to remain in the building.
 - (c) Councillor Fooks asked with regard to minute 66 (ICT Strategy) if the wording could be modified to make it more understandable. In response Councillor Price said that he had raised this and while everyone needed to read the information, the wording could have been better.

Single Executive Member decisions (Minutes)

- (1) Minutes for the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Housing Needs) held on 5th October 2011.
- (2) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships) held on 13th October 2011.
- (3) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships) held on 27th October 2011.
- (4) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Housing Needs) held on 3rd November 2011.
- (5) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Finance and Efficiency) held on 4th November 2011.
- (6) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – City Development) held on 10th November 2011.
- (7) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Finance and Efficiency) held on 29th November 2011.
- (8) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member – Finance and Efficiency) held on 2nd December 2011.

66. HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGES - MAKING OF BYELAWS

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which recommended Council to make Byelaws to control licensed Horse Drawn Carriages.

Councillor Nuala Young declared a personal interest as she was involved in the tourist trade.

Councillor Mohammed Abbasi declared a personal interest as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade.

Councillor Shah Jahan Khan declared a personal interest as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade.

Councillor Sajjad Malik declared a personal interest as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade.

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan declared a personal interest as he was involved in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade.

Council resolved not to authorise the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Environmental Development to carry out the necessary statutory procedures to make Byelaws for the control of licensed horse drawn carriages.

67. DESIGNATION OF STREETS FOR STREET TRADING

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought approval for the Designation of Streets for Street Trading.

Council resolved to designate all streets within the Oxford City Council trading boundary as Consent Streets for the purposes of the Street Trading Scheme with effect from 1st February 2012.

68. SITES AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) - PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought the approval of Council to publish the Proposed Submission Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD) for public consultation and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, to submit the draft DPD to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

Councillor Cook moved the report.

Councillor Nuala Young, seconded by Councillor Stuart Craft moved amendments to the recommendations to include the following:

(1) *To include in the recommendations the following:*

Bartlemas Nursery School

We consider that this site is important to the sense of isolation of the Bartlemas Conservation Area. We think a very smallscale day-time community use as day nursery, creche or day care centre for the elderly would be appropriate, with any proposed building being constrained to low rise, i.e. no higher than the present roof height of the Nursery, building and with the same footprint. This would protect the setting of this very special site and of the listed buildings in it.

East Oxford Bowls Club

We consider this gap in the frontage to be an important feature of this part of Oxford. The SR2 designation should be confirmed across the whole of the site – bowling green and pavilion – for a suitable day-time recreational community use whilst securing the security of the allotments. Any proposed associated recreational use buildings must be low impact and single storey to ensure the integrity of the BCA and the setting of the listed buildings.

(2) *St. Clements Car Park – Policy SP52*

In the first line, insert the words “low scale” before the word “residential” and “in keeping with the Conservation Area” after “accommodation”

Delete the words “or student” before “accommodation” and before “provision” in the penultimate lines, insert the words “either on site or local”.

(3) Union Street Car Park Policy SP59

Insert the words “facing Chapel Street and at the same height as buildings on Chapel Street” after “accommodation” in the 1st line, and “either on site or local” before “temporary” in the penultimate line.

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendments were not adopted.

Councillor David Rundle, seconded by Councillor Ruth Wilkinson moved three amendments as follows:

- (1) Under HP16 to add at the end the following words “Any car-free development will be required to include a prominent notice as part of its design announcing its car-free status”
- (2) Under SP23 and SP38 – (Noting it is also relevant for hospital sites) in relation to bus access to change the word “through” to the word “into”
- (3) Under SP41 to delete all of the words in the second sentence.

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendments were not adopted.

Councillor John Goddard seconded by Councillor Mark Mills moved the following amendments:

To delete the whole of the first sentence and the whole of point (a) and the letter “b” and all the words after the word “facilities” so that the amended Policy HP7 would read as follows:

“Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use of a dwelling in Use Class C3 where the applicant has demonstrated compliance with the City Council’s good practice on HMO amenities and facilities”

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendments were not adopted.

Councillor Graham Jones seconded by Councillor Jean Fooks moved the following amendments:

- (1) Delete from the first sentence the final words 'where practicable'.
- (2) In para. 3, in the first sentence replace the words 'unless it can be robustly demonstrated that such provision is not feasible' with 'or in exceptional cases make provision for offsetting carbon emission elsewhere'.
- (3) In para. 4, replace '10' with '5' in reference to dwellings; '20' with '10' in reference to student rooms, and in relation to areas of student accommodation replace '500' with '250' and '20' with '10'.
- (4) In para. 5, replace all with 'All proposals will be required to be accompanied by a sustainability checklist (Natural Resources Impact

Analysis, NRIA) and be encouraged to achieve reductions in energy use, ahead of the introduction of Part L of the Building Regulations on 1 October 2013, which will require improved energy efficiency in all new residential development.'

- (5) *Amend Appendix 6 to conform with these requirements.*

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendments were not adopted

Councillor Stephen Brown seconded by Councillor Jean Fooks moved the following an amendment to Policy HP15:

- (1) *To delete all of the words in HP15 and replace with the following words:*

Planning permission will only be granted for residential development (houses, flats, HMOs and student accommodation) that complies with the following minimum cycle parking provision:

At least ONE space to be provided for each occupant as indicated by the proposed number of bed spaces.

(For example a 4 double-bedroom property would require 8 spaces. While a 2 bedroom unit incl. a double and single room would require 3 spaces).

Planning permission will only be granted for other types of residential development if some opportunity for occupants to own and store bicycles is demonstrated. The precise amount required will be judged on the merits of each case, taking account of the likely demand for cycle use arising from future occupants.

All residential cycle storage must be secure, undercover, preferably enclosed, and provide level, unobstructed external access to the street.

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendments were not adopted

Councillor Stuart McCready seconded by Councillor Michael Gotch moved the following amendment to Policy HP10 as follows:

- (1) *Delete the words "taking into account the views from streets, footpaths and the wider residential and public environment" in paragraph (a).*

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendment was not adopted.

Councillor Stuart Craft seconded by Councillor David Williams moved an amendment as follows:

That we consider Ruskin Fields as a suitable site for housing.

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendment was not adopted.

Councillor Matt Morton seconded by Councillor John Tanner moved an amendment as follows:

To include the in the third line of the first paragraph of Policy SP15 – East Minchery Farm Allotments, the following words after 25% “of the gross site area”

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendment was adopted.

Councillor Matt Morton seconded by Councillor Jim Campbell moved an amendment as following to Policy HP8:

To delete points (a) (they are provided on off-channel basins) and (b) (there is adequate servicing including water supply, electricity, and disposal facilities for sewerage and rubbish)

Following a debate, Council voted and the amendment was not adopted

Council resolved:

- (a) To approve the Proposed Submission Sited and Housing DPD (Appendix 3) and the proposed changes to the Proposals Map (Appendix 4) with the inclusion of the adopted amendment by Councillor Morton to Policy SP15, for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks in early 2012;
- (b) To authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document, Sustainability Appraisals and Habitat Regulations Assessment, and to agree the final wording and designed versions of these documents before formal publication;
- (c) To approve the Proposed Submission Sited and Housing DPD as a material consideration in determining planning applications;
- (d) To approve all of the supporting documentation that includes that Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment, and Pre-Options and Preferred Options Consultation Report (Listed in Appendix 1);
- (e) That, following public consultation, to authorise the Head of City Development in consultation with the Executive Lead Member to make any minor changes to the document deemed necessary as a result of the public consultation, and then to formally submit the Sites and Housing DPD to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for public examination.

69. BARTON AREA ACTION PLAN - PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which following consultation on the Preferred Options for the Barton Area Action Plan (AAP) in the summer of 2011, draft planning policies had been prepared to guide development of the land at Barton. The policies were set out in the Proposed Submission Barton AAP and this report sought approval of Council to publish the Proposed Submission Barton AAP for public consultation early in 2012 and subject to the outcome the consultation, to submit the draft AAP to the Secretary of State for formal examination.

Councillor Cook moved the report.

Councillor Rundle seconded by Councillor Altaf-Khan moved amendments as follows:

- (1) *Under BA1 – In the first sentence, end first paragraph at ‘traffic speeds’ and delete the whole of the second and third paragraphs.*
- (2) *Under BA6 – In the first paragraph, delete the whole of the second sentence and in the second paragraph delete the word ‘private’*
- (3) *Under BA6 add a new fourth paragraph with the following words ‘it is inevitable that there will be some increase in traffic from the present entrance to Barton from the Green Road roundabout and measures will be investigated to improve access into Barton at that roundabout’*
- (4) *Under BA9 – after the second sentence add the words ‘within the limits set by the financial viability of the project, all efforts will be made to provide affordable housing above that minimum level’.*

Councillor Rowley seconded by Councillor Cook moved an amendment to Councillor Rundle’s third amendment as follows:

To add a fourth paragraph with the following words “Measures will be investigated to improve access to and from Barton via the Headington Roundabout”

Following a debate, Council voted and Councillor Rundle’s first, second, third and fourth amendments were not adopted, but Councillor Rowley’s amendment was.

Council resolved:

- (a) To approve, subject to the additional amendment by councillor Rowley to Policy BA6, the Proposed Submission Barton AAP and the proposed changes to the Oxford Proposals May for public consultation for a period for 6 weeks in early 2012, subject to the satisfactory completion of the current transport and drainage modelling studies;
- (b) To approve the supporting documentation listed in Annex 2, i.e. Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Pre-Options and Preferred Options consultation reports;
- (c) To authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment and to agree the final wording and designed version before publication for public consultation;
- (d) To approve the Proposed Submission Barton AAP as a material consideration in determining planning applications;

- (e) That following public consultation, to authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member, to make any minor changes to the document deemed necessary as a result of public consultation, and then to formally submit the Barton AAP to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for public examination.

70. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2012-13

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) the purpose of which was to set the Council Tax Base for 2012/13 as required by Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

Council resolved:

- (a) To approve that the 2012/13 Council Tax Base for the City Council's area as a whole be set at £47,134;
- (b) To approve the projected level of collection be set at 98%;
- (c) That the following bases for each of the Parishes, and for the unparished areas of the City be set as follows:

Unparished Area of the City	38,634
Littlemore Parish	1,943
Old Marston Parish	1,308
Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish	1,526
Blackbird Leys Parish	3,723
<u>City Council total</u>	<u>47,134</u>

Adjournment of Council

With the consent of Council, the Lord Mayor adjourned the meeting at 10.37pm to be reconvened at a future date to allow for the remaining business on the agenda to be completed.

Reconvened Council - Monday 16th January 2012

71. MEMBERS PRESENT FOR THE RECONVENED MEETING

The Lord Mayor (Councillor Benjamin), The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Armitage), the Sheriff (Councillor Fooks), Councillors Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Bance, Baxter, Brett, Brown, Brundin, Campbell, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Craft, Darke, Goddard, Gotch, Hazell, Humberstone, Shah Khan, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Malik, Mills, Morton, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Sanders, Seamons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Timbs, Van Nooijen, Wilkinson, Williams, Wolff and Young.

72. APOLOGIES FROM MEMBERS FOR 16TH JANUARY 2012

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones, Keen, McCready, McManners, Royce, Rundle and Turner.

73. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

This item was deferred when Council adjourned on 19th December 2011 and was dealt with at the reconvened meeting on 16th January 2012.

Councillor Brown, Chair of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee said that the Committee had been very busy considering the Benefits Fundamental Review, the Asset Management Framework and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Business Plan. These issues were being taken through Panel work and by holding single meeting issues as was the case with the Asset Management Framework. He added that the Budget Panel had so far met 12 times and was likely to meet a further 12 times before it made its conclusions. He welcomed the cross party collaborative nature of the work and thanked officers at all level of the organisation for their constructive participation.

Councillor Campbell, Chair of the Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee said that there was a perceived weakness that people did not know what scrutiny did, however despite very limited resources of less than 2 full time officers, they worked very hard to make scrutiny a success. He said that the Housing Panel was looking at the Housing Strategy and the impact of new legislation. There had been two single issue meetings on public health issues and regeneration. He added that the Committee had also produced a draft report on the Council Council's Education Strategy.

74. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

(a) Questions notified in time for replies to have been provided before this Council meeting.

1. Question to the Board Member, Stronger Communities (Councillor Antonia Bance) from David Williams

Youth Service provision in Oxford

Would the Portfolio Holder agree that now the County Council has decided to dramatically reduce the Youth Service in Oxford it is time for the City to take a lead and offer to transfer the service to City control at least within the boarders of the City Wards. Would she not also agree that the City would make a far better sponsor and manager of this vital service to the young people of Oxford than the County Council, which has treated it with disrespect and neglect over the years?

Answer: The councillor is correct in noting that the county council no longer provides a standalone youth service. Support for young people is now delivered through the two Early Intervention Hubs in the city, based at Union Street and Littlemore, which have a much wider remit than just youth work. Whilst this council welcomes the greater integration of the

other support functions for vulnerable children, young people and families that the restructure has brought, the reduction in youth work provision is at odds with the aspirations of our communities and this council.

The city council already runs a substantial youth programme - both through our Positive Futures and holiday activities programmes, and through our sports development and leisure work. This programme, started by the Labour administration of 2002-6 and continued ever since, is certainly one of the most substantial run by a district council in the country, and is something we are very proud of. In the last year, more than 1400 young people took part in our Positive Futures or holiday programming, and we devote more than £150,000 per year to this work (plus £88,000 from external sources for our Positive Futures targeted schemes). This council has recently agreed proposals to enable our services to raise additional funding to expand the service for young people in the city by trading and taking on additional contracts in other areas.

The councillor will also have noted that the administration's budget proposals include a significant increase in funding for both youth activities and educational achievement activities - another area that the county council has failed to prioritise. The youth activities funding – proposed to be at £240,000 per year for three years – will enable an expanded open access youth offer to young people in the city, both in areas of high deprivation and in some areas that have recently lost county council youth funding. This work will be co-ordinated with the county council's provision, but will be run independently by the city council and our partners, supporting voluntary organisations in the city and winning matched funding where possible. We look forward to the councillor and his colleagues supporting these budget proposals at the council's budget-setting meeting.

The administration has decided to pursue this route and provide more youth activities ourselves to meet the aspirations of the communities of the city for more for young people to do, and for more help for young people in tough times. We think we make a better sponsor and manager of youth activities than the county council as we are much closer to the communities of the city and can integrate our offer to young people with our brilliant sports and leisure facilities and with the work done by our partners in the voluntary sector. We will continue to work closely with county council colleagues to ensure speedy access to intensive targeted support for those families who need additional support, avoid duplication of provision, identify opportunities for joint working, prioritise safeguarding and provide constructive feedback from our communities on service provision.

To end on a general point: it is the view of this administration that most council-provided services to the citizens of Oxford City - including youth work - would be better provided by one council elected by the people of this city alone, and we will continue to work towards that happy day.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that the slow decline in youth service provision

started 6 years ago and that it is a delicate issue for the City when it starts supporting areas that the County no longer wants to.

In response Councillor Price said that he agreed with Councillor Williams and that youth service provision was an issue of concern. He said that the City Council was offering a different approach not based on youth clubs, but on activities and the prospects of working with the Council's partners on this were very good.

2. Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Dick Wolff

Student housing

"Could the Portfolio Holder give an indication of how much housing will be released into the open market by the student housing proposed in the Sites and Housing DPD?"

Given that there are at least 25 sites in this document said to be suitable for student accommodation, could he give an indication of how much student accommodation would result if all these scenarios were to come about and the favoured student accommodation was allowed?

Could he also say which of the 93 sites in total would definitely have student accommodation ruled out, since some like district centres seem to favour a flexible range of uses?"

Answer: No it is not possible to give an answer to this question. The City Council has no control over the occupation of private rented property.

The Sites policies are broad policy proposals. Whether student accommodation is proposed and the amount will only be determined through the planning application process. Even then not all planning permissions are implemented.

We have not quantified the number of student rooms that might occur on the sites allocated for students. It would be a pretty impossible task especially on mixed use sites.

Number of student rooms would depend upon:

- whether students accommodation was even proposed on a site where a variety of uses was acceptable
- whether any other uses came forward on the site too to restrict the amount of student accommodation
- an acceptable density and design of the proposal

Councillor Wolff in a supplementary question said that he felt that the question to the Board Member was quite clear, but asked how in the planning process which policy the Council could use when refusing one planning application over another.

In response Councillor Cook said that all applications were considered on their merits.

3. Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Michael Gotch

Provision of cemetery space

We welcome the decision not to use Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground for additional cemetery space. City policy is that recreation space is not to be redeveloped unless acceptable alternative recreation facilities are offered and none was at Wolvercote. Will the Portfolio Holder remind officer of that policy, and also instruct Officers to actively investigate two other sites at Barton north where Dignity Funerals PLC (who run the Crematorium) have offered to talk to the City Council about possibly running a new cemetery on the same site, and at Kidlington south where Cherwell District Council is currently developing a large new cemetery within easy reach of the City. Both of these sites could well involve the City in little or no capital expenditure.

Answer: The report to City Executive Board on the 7th of December updated members on the first phase of the cemetery project. Cemetery Development Services were appointed to undertake a full site search that led to 17 long listed sites reducing to a short list of four sites.

To gain further insight into the possibility of developing a cemetery at the preferred site, north of Oxford Road in Horspath, borehole tests will now be undertake over the next six months. Pending the results of these tests we will then enable a business case to be developed and submitted to the City's Executive Board towards the end of 2012. The business case will also cover other options, including a development with a partner. It will also show what level of alternative provision may be accessible to City residents.

Borehole tests for the Barton site show that the site is unlikely to be suitable, but it is now also being scored using the same assessment criteria that the other sites have been assessed under.

Councillor Gotch in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that there were no boreholes in Barton and that it would be a wiser move to work with Cherwell District Council on a Kidlington site.

In response Councillor Lygo said that the Council wanted to ensure that there was a site within the boundaries of Oxford.

4. Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Michael Gotch

Student accommodation and family housing

City Policy – to encourage the two Universities and other educational institutions to provide purpose built student accommodation is generally welcomed. Relevant planning applications are usually accompanied by claims that family housing will be vacated if the application is approved,

yet rarely, if ever, is any evidence is provided, before or after. Does the Portfolio Holder have any statistics demonstrating the return of family housing to family occupation? If not, will he instruct planning officers to compile and publish the figures for, say, the last three years (perhaps by reference to Council Tax information) and, in future, not to accept such planning application claims that are not backed by firm evidence.

Answer: Planning officers have only claimed that family housing 'will' become available as a result of granting permission for purpose built student accommodation where the former is owned by the applicant and has given that undertaking. In most instances there is no direct link between applicant and private rented accommodation occupied by students. The City Council has no control over the occupation of private rented accommodation.

There are no clear statistics of the number of homes where there has been a change of use from student accommodation to family housing. This change of use does not require planning permission. It is not possible to compile these figures from any Council source. The only authoritative source of data is the Census which is collected once every 10 years. The results of the 2011 census collected in March this year are anticipated to be released by the Government in 2013.

Councillor Gotch in a supplementary question asked if the Council actually knew what the situation was and what records were kept providing evidence that these developments freed up family housing.

In response Councillor Cook said that when colleges sold housing to fund new developments this was generally the only time that you could see family housing being freed up. He did not believe that you could obtain this information from Council Tax records as you would need to have a direct correlation between what was sold and what was built.

5. Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Park and Ride security

Does the Board member remember why security was introduced at the Park and Ride sites? Does he really think that CCTV and a telephone helpline adequately compensate for the lack of staff, particularly at night when the very large car parks can mean your car is parked a long way from any source of help if needed?

Answer: I understand that sometime ago, going back perhaps 20 years, vehicle crime in Oxford was one of the highest in the country. The Police have tackled this situation to a point where vehicle crime in Oxford is at a much lower level such that vehicle crime is not likely to reduce further. Higher security on modern cars and Police intervention, have both helped to secure this achievement.

The current CCTV operation is available at each site and is capable of being viewed by staff and in the Police control room. The Council is in the process of upgrading the CCTV cameras and systems to make them

more active (they will react to movement) and will be capable of being viewed by Police and staff. The system proposed has been discussed with Oxford's crime prevention officer who had no objections or major concerns about removing staff from these sites. These systems give Police Officers more control over sites and will allow them to respond directly and more quickly. CCTV is an effective crime control system.

When these sites were staffed there was no requirement to patrol the area during evening shifts, staff used CCTV to monitor the area from the site office.

The Help points will be available to assist customers with information and help. The crime prevention officer is currently deciding if they would prefer the emergency button to send a 999 signal or 101. At present they are leaning towards 999, but would monitor to see if too many false alarms occur. With upgraded CCTV system they would immediately be able to see where the incident is and therefore how to react.

Mobile phones are used by the majority of customers which can also be used to contact emergency services when needed from remote areas.

Oxford has a number of suburban sites that operate at night without staff or CCTV and none of these sites are experiencing any major vehicle crime.

It is possible that these systems will more than compensate for staff presence. The Council and Police will continue to monitor the situation at these sites.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked what consultation had been carried out with the public and what monitoring was being carried out.

In response Councillor Cook said that he had taken advice from experts and the Police in crime prevention who raised no concerns. He said that given the low level of crime that existed now, this was not an issue. He further added that the CCTV system was better because the Police would be viewing the images.

6. Question to the Board Member, Sport, Play and Schools Liaison (Councillor Mark Lygo) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Hinksey Pools leak

When and how was the leak at Hinksey Pools discovered? How long had it been losing water for which the Council was paying? How much did the leak cost – and has it yet been repaired?

Answer: Hinksey pools opened in 1934 and as is common with many older facilities there have been leaks on several occasions.

The most recent leak was discovered following a series of tests in 2010. It is not clear how long the pool had been leaking on this occasion, as the

weather conditions and water treatment also have an impact on the water depth.

The water bills for all the centres are paid directly by Fusion Lifestyle, the council's leisure operator. The council have been working closely with Fusion to find a long-term robust solution to the leak.

The repairs need to take place out of season and are programmed to start in February 2012. The budget cost for these works is £110,000.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member was happy with the water levels and the monitoring.

In response Councillor Coulter said that he was happy with the monitoring and that £100k had been made available for repairs which would be carried out in February 2012.

7. Question to the Board Member, Housing Needs (Councillor Joe McManners) from Councillor Nuala Young

Number of Council voids in lettings

“Could the Portfolio Holder indicate how many elderly people are on the waiting list for sheltered accommodation and for how long. Could he also give the figures for how many people have had to move out of the City to get sheltered accommodation. Also why are there so few new sites proposed for retirement or elderly homes in the Sites and Housing DPD?”

Answer: There are currently 110 applicants on the Housing Register who have been assessed as eligible for sheltered accommodation with a one-bedroom housing need. There are also a further 9 applicants with a two-bedroom housing requirement with an assessed need for sheltered accommodation. From 1/4/11 to 30/11/11 there have been 88 households housed in sheltered in accommodation, 82 in to one-bedroom sheltered properties and a further 6 households in to two-bedroom sheltered properties.

Waiting times on the Housing Register can vary significantly, there are currently over 6000 applicants on the housing register and only around 600 properties are expected to become available to let during 2011/12. Other factors that can impact significantly on waiting times include an applicant's housing need (based on the Council's Allocations Scheme), the size and type of property and area an applicant requires or is willing to move to in Oxford. Due to the high demand for housing and the low amount of properties that become available, many applicants on the Housing Register assessed as being in low housing need are unlikely to be made an offer of accommodation in the foreseeable future. However, if their circumstances and their housing needs are considered to have increased in the future, this will increase their chances of receiving an offer of accommodation. So if an applicant is only recently assessed as needing sheltered accommodation after waiting on the housing list for many years this will increase their chances of receiving an offer of accommodation.

There are 117 applicants on the Housing Register assessed as needing sheltered accommodation currently, the longest waiting application is 40 years old, however, this, lady has been considered adequately accommodated in her own home.

On the sites and development SPD question, the answer is that the urgent pressure on housing need and

Excluding the applicant above, the waiting times for applicants eligible for sheltered accommodation on the housing register are as follows:

37% are under one year old,
27% one to two years old,
23% 3 to 5 years old
13% 6 to 11 years old

It is not possible to provide information regarding where people have moved to after they have left Oxford because each Council manages their own Housing Register.

On the Sites and Development SPD, the main reason will be that the pressing urgent need is for family housing (more than 2 bed). The fact that 88 people were placed in Sheltered Accommodation in the first 6 months of the year with 110 on the list supports this.

Councillor Young in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member considered that the sale of Grantham House in Jericho was an unacceptable move.

In response councillor Price said that there were 110 people on the list and that 88 had been housed within the past 6 months. Grantham House was an old development and even with a refurbishment it would still not be of an appropriate level. He further added that Cardinal House following a redevelopment had come on stream in 2011 and Bradlands would this year.

8. Question to the Board Member, Housing Needs (Councillor Joe McManners) from Councillor Stuart Craft

Accommodation of homeless people

“At the last Full council meeting you promised to clarify whether the facts you had regarding the accommodation of homeless people at the Holiday Inn, Grenoble Road, were correct and whether the payment you had cited was for an individual or couple. As I have not received your response, can you please provide it now?”

Can you also provide the figures for how many people Oxford City Council has housed in hotels and bed and breakfast establishments in Oxford since you have held the portfolio and how much has this cost?”.

Answer: The Holiday Inn has only been used once to place a pregnant homeless applicant who had no where else to stay. The lady was placed for 2 nights because no other suitable accommodation could be identified

as available in or outside the city, and was moved as soon as a more suitable and cheaper property could be identified.

From 1/4/11 to date the Council has paid £64 000 to hotels for providing nightly charge accommodation for homeless households it has been necessary to place in emergency temporary accommodation in or around the City. These placements have been made because the Council has had a statutory duty to do so. If a person or family has been accepted as homeless, the council has a legal obligation to find accommodation. Placements into hotels have only been made as a last resort where no other suitable accommodation has been identified as available. The Council does re-charge Housing Benefit for those who are placed in such accommodation but is capped to only charging £22/night so can only recover a proportion of the cost.

The number of households placed in hotels at any one time varies depending on the availability of other suitable temporary accommodation; there are currently no families placed in hotels in the City. The maximum number of homeless families placed in to hotels at any one time from 1/4/11 to date has been 8 families.

The pressure on our homeless services has increased significantly after the Coalition Government's cuts to Housing Benefit. This has not only led to increased presentation as homeless but also less willingness of private sector landlords to accommodate with less HB.

What is particularly unsatisfactory is that for the last few years we have succeeded in reducing temporary accommodation, however this has left us with less flexibility in the system.

We have looked to put into place measures to try to cope with the increased pressure the homeless services but expect the situation to get worse as the government seeks to reduce benefits for the most vulnerable.

Councillor Craft in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member could justify this and other hotels charging this level for accommodation. Would the Board Member agree that the public interest would be better serviced by the Council retaining its own land and developing housing.

In response Councillor Price said yes, however the particular case cited by Councillor Craft was due to an extreme difficulty in finding accommodation for the person and that the number of properties available to the Council was dwindling.

9. Question to the Board Member, Customer Services (Councillor Val Smith) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Out-of-hours noise service

Why is there still no out-of-hours noise service between 5 and 6pm, i.e. between the time that Council staff go off duty, and the time that calls are forwarded to Astraline?

Answer: Callers for the Environmental Development out-of-hours noise service phoning after 5 pm Monday to Thursday, and after 4:30 pm on a Friday will be advised to call our out of hours provider Astraline. After 6pm calls are automatically routed to Astraline by the automated telephone system.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked why when she had called the number on 16th January 2012 the line went dead and what number should people actually call.

In response Councillor Smith said that the out of hours number given was the number to ring but added that the number of calls received between 5pm and 6pm was low. She added that ways of improving the service were continually being looked at.

10. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Nuala Young

Public toilets

“Could the Portfolio Holder give a list of the public toilets that have been closed or demolished over the last 10 years. Could he identify which toilets he has ordered closed since he became the Portfolio Holder in 2008 in that list.

Does he also recollect in 2009 promising to reopen the toilets he had proposed to close.

Would he further agree that the present standards of hygiene in the City toilets is inadequate and far from being ‘perfect’ the present situation needs to be improved?”

Answer: In 2001, when the Lib Dems ran the City Council, they closed public toilets in Ashurst Way and Blue Boar Street. In 2006, when the Lib Dems ran the Council with Green Party support, they closed St Bernards Road and St Giles toilets. I don’t recall promising to re-open toilets closed by the Lib Dems.

In 2009, when Labour ran the Council, we closed Castle Street and Barns Road. Castle Street was closed because of vandalism and drug use and because the Westgate Toilets are available close by.

We closed Barns Road toilets because toilets are available in the adjacent Cowley Centre. Abingdon Road and Wolvercote are now open only in the summer when demand is greatest.

Oxford now has 22 public toilets and 10 community toilets (including the facilities at the Town Hal) a total of 32 and a significant increase in toilets available to the public.

The toilet staff have achieved a high standard of cleanliness which has recently been independently assessed through unannounced inspections by the British Toilet Association (BTA). At the Loo of the Year Awards,

earlier this month, Oxford's public toilets came 14th in the highly contested United Kingdom Local Authority Public Conveniences category.

If Labour's proposed budget is agreed, we will spend money on making Oxford's public toilets even better next year.

Councillor Young in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member could investigate having the Officer responsible for closing the City Council toilets each evening, starting this at 8.00pm.

In response Councillor Tanner said that the centre of Oxford was full of toilets that were open, but no city Council toilets were closed before 5.00pm.

11. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor David Williams

Garden Waste Scheme

"Would the Portfolio give the present figures for those who have paid the charges for the Garden Waste Scheme?"

Could the Portfolio holder also give an indication where the garden wastes are going from households who have not paid the fee.

Could the Portfolio holder give an indication how much longer he intends to continue with the charging for garden waste collection given that the City with its bloated reserves could easily afford to deliver this service as a part of the normal Council collection systems.

Does the Portfolio Holder recall that one of the recommendations of the so called 'Bonn Report' on Waste and Recycling was that Oxford City Council should NOT introduce separate charges for waste collection?

Answer: There are 9,926 paid subscribers to the Garden Waste Scheme.

We assume that most residents are taking their garden waste to Redbridge or are home composting. Domestic landfill figures continue to reduce compared to 2010-11.

I share people's anger at having to charge for garden waste collections. But when the City Council's grant from Government is cut by a quarter in two years something has to give. Charges in other areas of waste and recycling would have been more damaging.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that the scheme was a waste of time as only 10% of households had signed up to it and would he agree to abandon this scheme and put the cost into the general rates.

In response Councillor Tanner said that the brown bin scheme had been a remarkable success.

12. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor David Williams

Refuse Collection Service

Now that complaints about the waste bin collections have almost tripled would the Portfolio holder reveal what has happened to the Code of Conduct for Waste Collection devised by the East Area Parliament back in the days when there was real local democracy.

Could he confirm that clear rules for householders and operatives collecting the bins were set down in that Code of Conduct.

Can the Portfolio holder acknowledge that officer pledged to incorporate that well worked out set of rules related to how bins were collected into a Code of Practice but that the vast majority of households have no idea that such a guide exists.

Would the Portfolio holder confirm that the suggestion of an agreed set of rules between local ratepayers and the Council collection service delivered to every household as a contract was one of the recommendations of the original Bonn report.

Answer: The City Council carries out 4,386,000 collections per year. Complaints in the period April-September 2011 are 0.07% which suggests that 99.93% of residents are happy with the service we provide. A new chargeable garden waste service was introduced in May 2011 and, as with some new schemes, there were a few initial teething problems during its introduction which could have contributed to the number of complaints.

But it is important that we learn from complaints and improve our service wherever we can. I shall be discussing with officers, the crews and the public what improvements we can make.

The booklet 'Your Guide to the improved Recycling & Waste Collection Service' incorporates clear rules for households for the presentation of their waste. This booklet, which includes many of the ideas put forward by the East Area Committee, was delivered to all households that received a blue wheelie bin in October 2010 along with an explanatory letter.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the front page of the Oxford Mail was wrong.

In response Councillor Tanner said yes.

13. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Recycling and small blocks of flats

While I anticipate that Councillor Tanner will try to blame the government for the slow increase in the city's recycling rate, could he please explain why small blocks of flats are still not allowed to have food caddies, which would help to raise the composting rate and decrease the waste sent to landfill? Is this not in his gift rather than the government's?

Answer: Despite the best efforts of the Coalition Government the City Council is steadily increasing food waste collections from private and council flats in the city. Flats with their own front door can be treated as any normal domestic house. Some flats with their own front door have already been issued with food caddies.

To find the best possible way to introduce a successful collection service for flats, we have launched a 6 month trial at 10 sites across the city. Five of these sites are run by the City Council and are a mixture of developments including a large sheltered block. The other five sites are in the private sector and they have agreed to take part in the trial which will also introduce bin washing. We are trialling purpose built food containers of various sizes and we are also comparing the use of 240 litre compost liners against a comprehensive bin washing programme.

The aim of the trial is to ensure that the best possible solutions are adopted.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked if Members could be reassured that the progress would be reported to scrutiny.

In response Councillor Tanner said yes.

14. Question to the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Ed Turner) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Council Tax – Unparished areas

Council will remember the concerns expressed by Mr Rodrigo about the council tax setting. As we are nearing the time when the Council Tax will be set for 2012/13, could Council be assured that the 'Special Expenses' for the unparished areas of the city will be fully explained? And that expenditure of the parish precepts is clearly set out for all to see?

Answer: Mr Rodrigo did indeed raise helpful points last year, although addressing some of these would be a matter for central rather than local government. The amount of special expenses will be detailed in the council tax setting report to Council in February 2012. The Council may only have limited information on the detailed spend of the precepts by Parishes as there is no obligation to provide such information in detail. To this extent it may be that Councillor Fooks may need to approach the parishes direct for the detail that she is seeking.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked if we can be sure that sufficient detail on what should be payable by each Council Tax payer is clarified. In response Councillor Price said that he would be seeking this information in this years budget report to ensure that the detail received is accurately displayed there.

15. Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Stuart Craft

Oxford City Council asset sales

“Can you provide me with a list of all Oxford City Council assets, including land and property, that have been sold off to the private sector since 1995?”.

Answer: A list of freehold disposals undertaken since 1995 has been circulated to all members. Some caution is advised as some recent transactions may not yet be recorded on the system, and the precise details of some of the older disposals have not always been recorded

Councillor Craft in a supplementary question asked if the Leader of the Council would agree that the income from the properties would have been higher than the sale price and that the City Council was operating social cleansing.

In response, Councillor Price did not agree to either point raised by Councillor Craft.

16. Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Williams

Days of work

“Could the Portfolio holder confirm that 15,404.6 days were lost to sick leave from a base of around 1200 staff last year. Would he agree that means that the average number of sick days is 12.8 compared to the average public sector of 8.3 (The previous year the average at OCC was claimed to be 10.7 days). In 2009 it was reported that Vale of the White Horse averaged 5.7 sick days, Cherwell 6.3 and South Oxfordshire only 3.6 days). Given that the cost for temporary staff was £3,664,977.08 would he share my concern that OCC appears to be such a poor employer.

Could he confirm that these figures are correct and that after numerous claims to be addressing this issue there has not been the very substantial improvement that is required?”.

Answer: The correct figure for 2010/11, as reported in the sickness outturn report to Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee, was 10194.28 days lost. With an average FTE figure of 1114.3, the average number of days lost per FTE was 9.15 days. Comparisons with other nearby local authorities have to take account of the City Council's large manual workforce in comparison with these other authorities which have externalised large parts of their direct service operations. Manual workers, both in local government as elsewhere in the economy, have average sickness absence rates that exceed those for non-manual workers due to the nature of the work performed. There is still room for improvement but it is pleasing that the position has improved significantly over the past year and the figure recorded is well below the nearly 13 days lost per FTE in earlier years. In 2012 the management team is likely to introduce further measures to improve attendance, including improvements to our health & well-being programme, occupational health provision and more action to reduce short term sickness absence.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the Leader of the Council felt that it was time to check the figures as there seemed to be

discrepancies. In response Councillor Price said that he would request the Head of People and Equalities to look at the figures again.

17. Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Williams

Cross Party Chief Executive Appraisal

“Could the Supreme Leader confirm that the usual six monthly cross party appraisal of the performance of the Chief Executive by the Leaders of the three major local parties will no longer take place and that in future he personally will conduct the appraisal of the Chief Executive on a continual basis.

Could he confirm that this is yet another small step towards total control in his hands?”.

Answer: No. The annual appraisal of the performance of the Chief Executive and the setting of key personal objectives for the following twelve months will continue to be undertaken on a cross party basis, with support from an external facilitator from SOLACE. This is standard good practice around the sector. The exceptional six monthly review cycle was introduced following the appointment of a new Chief Executive to provide support in taking up the new post. The move to the normal annual cycle will be cost saving to the Council in relation to the fees paid to SOLACE.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the Leader of the Council would agree to give a commitment to a one year cycle.

Councillor Price in response said no. It was open to the Group Leaders to have meetings with the Chief Executive and that it was a common approach in Local Government to have an annual review.

18. Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Matt Morton

E-Search system for licensing

“Would the Leader agree that it would be helpful to the public seeing information on licensing applications if an e-finder search system was introduced on the Council website for licensing in the way it works for planning. Would the Leader give a commitment to look into this suggestion and to report back as a later stage to the City Executive Board?”.

Answer: An e-finder search system for licensing applications has been in place for some time on the Council website and works in a similar way to the Planning counterpart. Simply go on the website, click on 'Do it now', this pulls up the A-Z and then look at 'L' for licensing. Applications can then be checked.

I will also ask for another link to be put in the 'Most Visited' category next to planning applications.

(b) Questions notified by the deadline in the Constitution (replies given orally at Council)

19. Question to the Board Member, City Development, (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Jim Campbell

Westgate Car Park Charges

In his response at CEB to John Goddard's proposal (one which would benefit both retailers and the public) to waive charges at Westgate Car Park on the two Thursday evenings before Christmas, Councillor Cooks replied that the Council (aka the Labour administration) could "only go so far". Could he please tell us how far so far is?

Response: It is as far as it is fiscally prudent to do so.

Councillor Campbell in a supplementary question asked what steps the Board Members and the City Executive Board had taken to support local businesses.

In response Councillor Cook said that in partnership with the county Council, a City Centre Manager had been appointed.

20. Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Mary Clarkson

Oxford Covered Market

I understand that the Covered Market unit, which was formerly Palms Delicatessen has been let to a business called 'Cards Galore'. How many other expressions of interest were there for this unit and how many were discounted by Officers?

Response: A total of 42 enquiries were received. All but 2 of those were for uses that were considered inappropriate and as a consequence were not pursued further. Of the 2 that remained, one was Cards Galore, the party who has now taken the unit, the other was discounted as not offering the best consideration.

Councillor Clarkson in a supplementary question asked what the main priority was.

In response Councillor Cook said that provided the new business met the criteria and then it depended on how much rental income the Council would receive.

21. Question to the Board Member, Housing Needs (Councillor Joe McManners) from Councillor Tony Brett

HMO Amenity and Facilities Good Practice Guidelines

Given that this council's "HMO Amenity and Facilities Good Practice Guidelines" make it clear that one shared bathroom which includes a lavatory is sufficient for up to four people in an HMO can Cllr McManners

tell me why, with just two more people a second bathroom (also containing a lavatory) is not deemed sufficient by the administration? Can he tell me how many extra lavatories in the last 12 months this council has forced landlords to have installed in 6-person HMOs that already had two lavatory-containing shared bathrooms?

Response: There are no national standards for facilities and amenities in HMOs and each council must produce its own guidelines. Our standards were developed following consultation with landlords in the city as well as consideration of work carried out by other local authorities. Some of the proposed standards were amended following comments from landlords. We recently compared our standards with those used by 14 other similar cities and concluded that the standards being applied in Oxford are consistent with those being applied elsewhere.

The use of an HMO is considered to be very different to a family house occupied by a similar number of people which is why additional standards are required. For example, 6 young professionals living in a house are all likely to be getting ready to go to work at the same time in the morning and so both bathrooms are likely to be in constant use. A separate w.c. is therefore an essential amenity for the other occupiers.

There were only two HMOs licensed in the last 12 months where an additional separate toilet was required to be installed. Both of these properties were occupied by 6 people and had 2 bathrooms. The additional toilet compartment was provided at one property by partitioning off the toilet from the remainder of the bathroom.

In the last 12 months a total of 359 licences have been issued so only 0.5% of HMO licences have required an additional separate w.c.

Councillor Brett in a supplementary question asked why this was the case.

In response Councillor Price said that the response set this out clearly.

22. Question to the Board Member, Housing Needs (Councillor Joe McManners) from Councillor Tony Brett

HMO Applications

In the last 12 months, how many Oxford homes where an HMO license has been applied (or re-applied) for have passed the inspection without the Council requiring modifications, or additions before the grant of the license? What percentage of total homes inspected in that period does that figure represent?

Response: The records indicate that in the last 12 months only 11 HMOs were inspected that did not require any work before the licence was granted.

A total of 454 inspections have been carried out so this represents 2% of the total for the same period.

In the last 12 months 4 successful prosecutions of HMO landlords and letting agents have been taken and one letting agent was formally cautioned for licensing offences. A HMO landlord has also been prosecuted for illegally evicting tenants and was given a 6 week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, plus 60 hours community service. A further 5 cases have been referred to Law & Governance for prosecution for failing to licence HMOs and currently over 30 properties are being formally investigated for licensing offences. In addition the council has used its powers to issue an Interim Management Order to take over an HMO where the landlord was refused a licence because he was not a fit and proper person. Significant improvements have been made to this property which is being brought up to standard.

These figures and the high level of enforcement action demonstrates the need for our HMO licensing scheme and shows that we are committed to driving up standards in the private rented sector. This is more important than ever as so many people now have to use the private rented sector to find a home. The improvement work also represents a real investment in improving standards in the private sector and should be welcomed by council.

Councillor Brett in a supplementary question asked if the test was to stringent as it implied that the vast majority of HMO's were unfit for tenants.

In response Councillor Price said that the figures spoke for themselves and that most works related to fire precautions at the property and he felt that regulation was overdue.

23. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor David Williams

Bin collection service complaints

"Could the Portfolio holder confirm that the number of complaints about the Bin Collection system have trebled this year.

Could he further comment on the possibility that his scheme of reducing the number of operatives in each team collecting the receptacles, has had a marked effect on the service and is the underlying reason for the increased level of complaints.

Could the portfolio holder also explain whatever happened to the Code of Conduct on waste Collection devised and approved by the East Area Parliament nearly two years ago that was passed to relevant officer and which would have addressed many of the complaints now being made"

Response: No, the number of complaints about refuse collection and recycling has actually fallen. We are examining the complaints at present but a significant number seem to be about missed bins. Complaints are important to the City Council as an aid to improving the service.

Reducing the number of crew on each bin round was made possible when the City Council stopped collecting so-called side-waste, the black bags of

mixed waste left alongside green wheelies. This change has not only saved the taxpayer money but also encouraged higher levels of recycling.

'The City Council's guide to the improved recycling and waste service, October 2010, sets out the dos and don'ts of the service. The information is also on the website at:

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decER/Environmentwasteandrecycling.htm> The overwhelming majority of Oxford citizens find the blue wheelie and food waste caddy system works well and is easy to use.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that this was a 'red herring' on reducing the number of operatives in the cabs. The volume of waste collected was the same with fewer people doing the collecting. The policy on the black bag was not truthful.

Councillor Tanner in response said that the amount of waste collected had fallen due to residents being encouraged to use one bin. This was also very beneficial as less waste went to landfill.

24. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Dick Wolff

Complaints on informally moored boats

In the recently published New Revenue Investment proposals, £44,000 is being set aside over 2 years for proactive riverbank enforcement, while only £24,000 is budgeted over the same 2 years for proactive noise nuisance control. There have been 1780 complaints over the last 2 years about noise nuisance, resulting in just 22 noise abatement orders. How many complaints have been received about informally moored boats?"

Given that the Housing minister, Grant Schapps has exhorted councils to proactively use their riverbanks to have moorings that will offset a little of the homeless problem and this problem is likely to worsen, should we not be setting up moorings for homeless people rather than persecuting them in this way?

2 years ago I was compelled to ask the council to hold off evicting several families from their moorings just before Christmas. At the time the council did not have a policy on riverside moorings. I understand that a policy has been developed, but have not heard the details. Please enlighten me.

Response: - £44000 will be a one off temporary budget for mooring enforcement etc. during office hours over the two year period. In the same period, £96,000 will be made available in the budget for out of hours noise enforcement. This latter figure is made up of £36,000 per annum for reactive work plus £12,000 per annum for pro-active work, making £48,000 per year.

The budget sums are in keeping with the work involved and reflect the position with service requests. The Council receives between 500-600 service requests on average each year relating to alleged unlawful mooring for example.

As a matter of policy, the Council recognises the part that is played by fully serviced residential boat moorings. It is also aware of the importance of ensuring that such moorings are properly located and so works closely with key partners such as British Waterways and the Environment Agency to identify suitable sites.

There is a general policy presumption for example, that such moorings will not be permitted on the main river channel but will need to be in basins or navigable streams. Consequently survey work has shown that, opportunities for new residential moorings are limited & at best the handful of possible new moorings resulting will do little in the face of the homelessness problem.

Councillor Wolff in a supplementary question asked what are service requests and these would still cost money to deal with. He asked if this would be better dealt with in a report for Members.

In response Councillor Tanner said that the bulk of requests were about other people mooring their boats illegally. He said that the Council was clear that it did not want additional boats illegally moored and that to resolve this, the number of moorings of the main channels needed to be increased.

25. Question to the Board Member, Cleaner, Greener Oxford (Councillor John Tanner) from Councillor Graham Jones

Advertising Boards

Will the Administration consider what can be done to remove the forests of letting boards from Oxford's streets?

Response: Estates agents boards normally benefit from 'deemed advertisement consent' whilst the site is for sale or for rent and for 14 days afterwards. The Council does not have any control provided they meet certain requirements. The rules are set out in Class 3A of the Advertisement Regulations 2007, which state:

Class 3A permits the display of a single board or two joined boards to be displayed (usually by estate surveyors, chartered surveyors, auctioneers and valuers), advertising that residential, agricultural, industrial or commercial land or premises, on which they are displayed, are for sale or to let, or that the land on which the board is displayed is to be sold or let for development for residential, agricultural, industrial or commercial use. Illumination is not permitted. Where the advertisement consists of more than a single board or two joined boards only the first advertisement to be displayed will benefit from deemed consent.

Size limits apply. No advertisement board is allowed to extend outwards from the wall of a building by more than 1 metre. The height above ground level at which the advertisement may be displayed is limited as is the size of characters or symbols on the board.

The only permitted additions to the board(s) are statements saying that

the sale or letting has been agreed, or that land or premises have been sold or let, subject to contract. Boards must be removed not later than 14 days after the sale has been completed or the tenancy has been granted.

The Council does not proactively monitor compliance of all estate agents' boards in the city, however we will investigate all specific complaints when they are raised, and we do pursue offenders. The Council has addressed problems associated with groupings of estate agent boards, and has taken action against particular estate agents when they have been causing a particular problem. The Council will continue to respond to complaints.

26. Question to the Board Member, Safer Communities, (Councillor Bob Timbs) from Councillor Ruth Wilkinson

Leaflets and fliers

There is resident concern that poorly delivered leaflets and fliers left sticking out of letterboxes attract attention to the absence of the occupier and increase the likelihood of break-ins. Please can the Board Member responsible for safer communities outline the ways in which the City Council works with businesses to improve leaflet delivery etiquette?

Response: Councillor Timbs said It is a standard requirement that distributors delivering Council material should post any material right through the letterbox. If it is brought to our attention that this instruction has not been carried out we will report this to the distributor and ask them to check the area concerned immediately and post through any that are still left sticking out.

We will ensure that we remind distributors before each delivery that it is essential that this obligation is carried out and we will make it clear that any individuals responsible for delivering in this manner should not be employed to distribute our material again.

The City Council is not responsible for delivery of non council material.

The police have not identified this as an area in which measures are needed for crime prevention but we will discuss with them what might be feasible given the very large number of distribution arrangements that exist in the city.

Councillor Wilkinson in a supplementary question asked if it would also help if the issue was raised at the Neighbourhood Action Group. In response Councillor Timb's agreed with Councillor Wilkinson's suggestion.

27. Question to the Leader of the Council, (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor David Williams

Support for small local businesses

"Following the Portas Review, which contains much advice and ideas for Local Authorities to consider, what is the Council doing to support small

local businesses and how will it consult on, and respond to, the recommendations in the Review?"

Response: The Portas Review was submitted to the Government and it is for Ministers to respond to, rather than local councils. If and when the Government publishes any proposals for consultation, we will of course consider them at that time and respond.

However, the City Council does play an active role in relation to the city centre business community through the City Centre Manager, and through him we are following up on the Review in discussions with City Centre retailers and County Council officers. A workshop is being held later this week with the Covered Market traders as part of this exercise.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question asked if the Leader of the Council would provide a report on the workshop held.

In response Councillor Price said that the business rates were set nationally. He added that a great deal of work had to be undertaken in planning terms to protect the diversity of trade and agreed that this issue would be a good one for scrutiny and the Cross Party Working Group to consider.

28. Question to the Leader of the Council, (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Graham Jones

Bus tabling

Will the Administration work with its partners to bring about a change in the law to allow joint-route bus operators to share control room data that enables the proper operation of joint timetables?

Response: Yes; an excellent proposal.

75. STATEMENTS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Councillor Joe McManners submitted the following Statement On Notice:

On the Coalition Government's 'Under occupying' clause (11) of the Welfare Reform Bill.

Lord Mayor, colleagues and members of the public I would like to draw Council's attention to a particularly unjust and problematic clause of the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Bill.

This is the so called 'bedroom tax' for social tenants set to be introduced in April 2013. If passed, it would implement a docking of Housing Benefit for Social Housing tenants.

The clause would change the rules so that a tenant who was deemed to have a spare room would lose around on average £13 a week of Housing Benefit. The rules would be made stricter, so that, for example, a family

would have their benefit docked if there were two teenage daughters not sharing a room. Or a couple where one is just under the pensionable age who have 2 rooms.

It is estimated it would affect 670,000 households in the country.

This is not only unfair, as it affects it financially penalises the worst off by forcing them to move or to cut their household budgets. It is also poorly conceived, as in all likelihood those moving would either go into the private rental sector with higher rents so adding to the cost, or rent arrears will increase, putting pressure on us as a council.

It is also impractical as tenants would be expected to have the lower benefit rate applied immediately. So perhaps their 18 year old son moves for a job but then loses it, his parents would be expected to move the day after he leaves. This inflexible, punitive plan is exactly the sort of muddled, unjust policy that we as a council should be protecting our tenants from.

Lord Best (a cross bencher) has successfully moved an amendment to remove this draconian clause, this will be passed back to the Commons where if the Liberal Democrat party oppose it, it will not happen. However, it seems likely the Government will reinstate the clause. Since it is not Lib Dem policy or in the Coalition agreement this should be rejected.

I will ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and all Lib Dem MPs to ask them to withdraw this clause, and call on MPs to maintain the amendment.

I invite the Leaders of the other groups on the council to co-sign the letters.

76. CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS

No petitions were submitted for debate.

77. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Council had before it 14 Motions on Notice and reached decisions as follows:

(1) Means tests for Councillors – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft, seconded by Councillor Nuala Young)

This Council agrees that Councillors with an annual household income exceeding £75,000 have no need to claim their allowance and that this money would be better spent in the interests of the City's Council Tax payers.

With this in mind, Council agrees to set up a Committee to decide the details of a system of means testing for City Councillors in order to remove the allowance from those councillors with annual incomes exceeding £75,000.

Council requests that those Councillors currently falling into this category voluntarily give up their allowance until a formal system is introduced.

Council also agrees to request that City Councillors who are also County Councillors put forward a motion to the same ends to the County Council.

Following a debate, Council voted and the Motion was not adopted

(2) Resignation of the City Council Leader – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft)

Oxford City Council has engaged in transactions resulting in public land being sold to the benefit of Oxford Brookes University. Council has also decided a major planning application by Brookes that received a large amount of opposition from local residents.

Council understands that it would be perfectly reasonable for members of the public to conclude that the Leader of Oxford City Council, Bob Price, has a conflict of interest when dealing with Oxford Brookes as he is a Director at the university.

With this in mind Council agrees, to remove the Leader from office as provided for in paragraph 1.4(c) of the Constitution.

The Motion fell as there was no seconder.

(3) Temple Cowley and Blackbird Leys Pools – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft seconded by Councillor David Williams)

If the current plans for a new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys were to go ahead, the land at Temple Cowley along with playing fields (and mature trees) in Blackbird Leys will be lost – probably forever.

As councillors we are entrusted to safeguard the City's assets for future generations.

With this in mind, this Council asks the Executive to put plans for a new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys on hold until:

- (a) An alternative source of funding becomes available other than the proposed funds from the sale of Temple Cowley Pool.
- (b) An alternative site for the new pool, which does not encroach on existing playing fields or have a negative effect on neighbouring residents' lives, is found.

Following a debate, Council voted and the Motion was not adopted

(4) Oxford Transport Strategy and Motorcycles – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft seconded by Councillor Dick Wolff)

Oxfordshire County Council's Transport Strategy fails to address the benefits of motorcycle use as an alternative to the car.

Motorcycles can be a cheap alternative to cars for commuters who live off the main bus routes. Motorcycles take up less road space than cars and can fit through smaller gaps which keeps traffic flowing.

Modern bikes are very fuel efficient and are subject to more emission controls (within the EU) than cars. As motorcycles spend less time stationary than other vehicles the engines also run more efficiently.

With this in mind, this Council agrees to write to the County Council encouraging councillors to investigate initiatives that would encourage more motorcycle usage across the county.

Following a debate, Council voted and the Motion was adopted.

(5) Business Rate Concessions – (Proposer – Councillor Dick Wolff, seconded by Councillor David Williams)

Councillor Sajjad Malik declared a personal interest as he owned a business in Oxford.

This Council will investigate the possibility, suggested in amendments to the Localism Bill that there may be the potential to vary the level of business rate and if Oxford City Council is able to introduce a reduced business rate for small independent trading units offset by a higher rate for units which are part of national and multinational chains. A report on the possibility of introducing such a scheme to be brought to the Executive Board in the spring once the full extent of the new legislation is known with a view to the potential implementation in the financial year 2013 -2014.

Following a debate, council voted and the Motion was not adopted.

(6) Language Schools – (Proposer – Councillor Nuala Young, seconded by Councillor David Williams)

Councillor Nuala Young declared a personal interest as she had in the past given language tours.

This Council will re-establish the Language School Forum with full officer support. The Forum will seek to bring together all summer school and EFL providers with the intention of establishing a Code of Conduct to guide the operation of local language school groups and their activities in the City and to create a set of quality standards for foreign students studying in the City for long and short periods of time. A report on restabilising the Language School Forum be brought to the Executive in the New Year with an outline of objectives, an operational plan and full costings.

Following a debate, Council voted and the Motion was not adopted.

(7) Autumn Budget – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconded by Councillor Matt Morton)

With accrued surpluses in reserves now in excess of £5.2million and the excellent news that Icelandic Bank investments are to be released. Oxford City Council adopts the amended budget as set out in below. The Council

will retain £2 million, plus the extra returned reserves from the Icelandic investments as a prudent reserve and spend £3.7 million on the identified themes as set out in the appendix.

£1000's	2011/12 (half year)	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<u>Additional Savings</u>				
Limit SRA allowance on CEB to five Councillors and reduce remainder by £2k each	-22.5	-45	-45	-45
Further energy savings and income from grants and advice to external organisations	0	-10	-10	-15
Increase parking charges in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base budget)	-75	-150	-150	-150
Increase taxi licensing fees in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base)	0	-13	-13	-13
Increase Planning fees in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base)	0	-3	-3	-3
Increase Licensing fees in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base)	0	-10	-10	-10
Revise down senior staff no.s/salaries to reflect reduced budgets & responsibilities	-50	-200	-200	-200
Abandon sale of St Clement Car Park	0	-60	-60	-60
Increase incomes from property by 0.5% over 4 years	0	-50	-100	-150
income from solar feedin tariff	-10	-40	-40	-40
Take out £1500 per member in exchange for area cttee budget	-36	-72	-72	-72
Total additional savings	-193.5	-653	-703	-758
Cumulative additional savings	-193.5	-846.5	-1549.5	-2307.5
<u>Additional costs</u>				
Additional pru borrowing costs on lost capital receipt from St Clements car park	115	224	219	213
additional part-time sustainability officer	10	20	20	20
reinstate area committee budgets, area planning & staffing	101	202	202	202
Prudential borrowing on other capital investment of £500k	25	49	48	46
keep Temple Cowley Pool open	113	159	159	159
reinstate free green waste collection	74.5	214	279	279
new fund-raising officer	25	50	50	50
Total additional costs	463.5	918	977	969
<u>Net effect on budget in-year</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>265</u>	<u>274</u>	<u>211</u>
<u>Cumulative effect on budget</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>535</u>	<u>809</u>	<u>1020</u>

Alternative budget transfer to/(from) reserves	-270	-265	-274	-211
Alternative Budget Net Budget Requirement	0	0	0.0	0.0

General Fund Working Balances				
1st April	4,427	4,973	4,135	3,492
Approved Transfers to (From) working balances (Feb 11)	816	-573	-369	-610
Additional transfer to (from) working balance - Green proposals	-270	-265	-274	-211
Working Balances as at 31st March	4,973	4,135	3,492	2,671

Green Group amendment to Capital Budget

	2011/12 £000'S	2012/13 £000'S	2013/14 £000'S	2014/15 £000'S
CAPITAL PROGRAM AS PER CEB 9TH FEBRUARY	28,777	13,677	13,480	12,295
SAVINGS				
Pool extn to BBL leisure centre	7,365	500	0	0
Rephasing of buildings refurbishment programme (5 years not 4)		500	500	500
ADDITIONAL SPENDING				
buildings & energy improvements to Temple Cowley Pools & Gym	3,000	0	0	0
investment in solar array (s) on Council buildings	500	0	0	0
REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAM	24,912	12,677	12,980	11,795

FINANCING				
FINANCING AS PER CEB REPORT 9TH FEBRUARY	28,777	13,677	13,480	12,295
Savings				
Savings in Prudential borrowing re competition pool	-7000			
Savings in use of capital receipts re competition pool	-365	-500		
Savings in use of capital receipts rephasing of refurbishment		-500	-500	-500
Additions				
Additional prudential borrowing re solar arrays	500			
Additional prudential borrowing re Temple Cowley Pool	3000			
REVISED CAPITAL FINANCING	24,912	12,677	12,980	11,795

Councillor David Williams withdrew the Motion on Notice.

(8) Health and Care Bill – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconded by Councillor Nuala Young)

Councillor Mark Mills declared a personal interest as his parents were both employees of the National Health Service.

Councillor Beverley Hazell declared a personal interest as her husband was an employee of the National Health Service.

Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan declared a personal interest as he was an employee of the National Health Service.

"Oxford City Council believes the Health and Social Care Bill currently before Parliament and in the House of Lords will:

- Significantly increase the portion of Oxfordshire NHS owned and operated in the interests of profit-making corporations.
- Increase costs, fragment services and reduce the quality of care.
- Lead to the closure of NHS hospitals in Oxfordshire.
- Dismantle vital cooperative relationships built over many years.
- Force drastic change on an organisation which requires stability.
- Create increased transaction costs and profits at the expense of patient care.
- Give powers to the Oxfordshire Clinical Consortia to deny care, close services, introduce charges and top-up fees and sell private insurance.
- Remove the Secretary of State's duty to provide a Health Service free at the point of use.
- Leave Oxfordshire NHS unprotected against the full impact of European Union competition Laws by removing the public service exemption clause.
- Remove the cap on the number of private patients NHS Hospitals in Oxfordshire can treat, thus denying care to NHS patients.

For these reasons this Council urgently writes forthwith to the Government spokesperson in the House of Lords to consider these issues and decide if he should:

- (a) Call upon all members of the House of Lords, regardless of Party affiliation, to reject the Health and Social Care Bill.
- (b) Explore the reasons behind the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nurse's opposition to this Bill.

- (c) Take into account the general level of opposition by the public to the privatisation of the NHS.

Councillor Mark Mills, seconded by Councillor Stephen Brown moved an amendment as follows:

Delete

Delete all of the first and second lines at the beginning of the Motion.

Insert

Insert the following at the start of the Motion "this Council notes the concerns expressed both by Members of Council and residents of the city about the Health and Social Care Bill currently before Parliament and in the house of Lords, which include but are not limited to the perception that the Bill will:"

Insert

A new bullet point at the end to read "Despite this Council does not believe that the present arrangement of the NHS can be left unchanged. For too long, previous governments have centralised the NHS, resulting in structures that often feel remote and confusing to patients, and have in relative terms neglected social care."

Delete

Delete point (a)

Insert

Insert a new point (a) to read "Calls upon Members of the House of Lords to seek amendments that protect and strengthen the NHS, while promoting social care."

- Lead to the closure of NHS hospitals in Oxfordshire.
- Dismantle vital cooperative relationships built over many years.
- Force drastic change on an organisation which requires stability.
- Create increased transaction costs and profits at the expense of patient care.
- Give powers to the Oxfordshire Clinical Consortia to deny care, close services, introduce charges and top-up fees and sell private insurance.
- Remove the Secretary of State's duty to provide a Health Service free at the point of use.
- Leave Oxfordshire NHS unprotected against the full impact of European Union competition laws by removing the public service exclusion clause.

- Remove the cap on the number of private patients NHS Hospitals in Oxfordshire can treat, thus denying care to NHS patient

- Despite this Council does not believe that the present arrangement of the NHS can be left unchanged. For too long, previous governments have centralised the NHS, resulting in structures that often feel remote and confusing to patients, and have in relative terms neglected social care.

For these reasons this Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write forthwith to the Government spokesperson in the House of Lords to consider these issues and decide to:-

- (a) Calls upon Members of the House of Lords to seek amendments that protect and strengthen the NHS, while promoting social care.*
- (b) Explore the reasons behind the British Medical Association with the Royal College of Nurses opposition to this Bill.*
- (c) Take into account the general level of opposition by the public to the privatisation of the NHS.*

The mover of the substantive Motion, Councillor David Williams did not accept the amendment by Councillor Mills and following a debate, Council voted and the substantive Motion was adopted.

(9) National Planning Framework – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconded by Councillor Nuala Young)

With the Coalition Government launching a consultative period on changes to planning requirements for land development under a new National Planning Policy Framework, Oxford City Council would seek to input to that consultation by making the following comment:

“The key to new housing development rests with general economic development and change, not deregulation. This obvious conclusion was accepted by both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties prior to the last election and neither party proposed radical changes to planning policies. There is therefore no popular mandate for these changes

This Council supports the stance taken by the Campaign for Rural England, the National Trust and the RSPB that revision of the protection of the most fertile farmland as identified in the original Open Green Space Planning Document by a revised code that suggests (paragraph 167) ‘Local Authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land’ is a retrograde step and will effectively lead to a free for all of development on prime agricultural land.

This Council believes that the existing requirements on developers have been built up over many generations to provide a balance between the need to meet housing need and the duty to protect the environment. The structure as it is already provides a positive range of opportunities and great flexibility for developers and to abandon controls that have worked

will only lead to further erosion of the Green Belt and green space availability.

The presumptions within the new proposals will shift the emphasis in planning from developing brownfield sites first in preference to prime greenfield sites. This will mean not only loss of countryside areas but will also undermine urban redevelopment.

At the heart of the framework is the weak definition of 'sustainable development' which emphasises the primacy of business and housing development over almost all considerations. Oxford City Council believes, notwithstanding having an approved Core Strategy, there will be increased pressures on Oxford's green open spaces, transport system and community facilities from developers being able to suggest that virtually any project is 'sustainable'. Oxford City Council believes that there is an intrinsic value to Greenfield sites not only aesthetically but because best quality agricultural land will play a critical part in sustainable development providing food in a world of global pressures from climate change and population growth. The Oxford Green Belt also needs strong protection to provide a unique setting to this important historic City.

Oxford City Council calls on the Government not to implement the changes envisaged in the consultative National Planning Framework Document and directs the Chief Executive to write to the relevant Coalition Government Minister expressing the themes of this motion."

Councillor Bob Price moved an amended Motion seconded by Councillor Stephen Brown as follows:

With the Coalition Government launching a consultative period on changes to planning requirements for land development under a new National Planning Policy Framework Oxford City Council would seek to input to that consultation by making the following comment:

The City Council have an acute housing shortage and are seeking to provide as much housing as we can given the scarcity of land within the tight administrative boundaries of the city and the constraints of the Green Belt, attractive landscape setting and flood plain.

Cities such as Oxford which are keen to provide more housing but are subject to significant constraints on development with a limited land supply should be encouraged to consider 'urban extensions' working jointly with neighbouring authorities. The only alternative will be for densities to increase on existing and or redeveloped residential sites, which will risk harming the character and appearance of suburbs. Council is concerned that wording on the Green Belt is overly restrictive and will lead to less sustainable locations being developed as an alternative.

The Council believes that the NPPF should allow for targeted reviews of the Green Belt to be undertaken,

The NPPF talks in terms of planning for a mix of housing to meet local needs but does not give importance to the provision of affordable housing as a national priority.

Council believes that the NPPF should be much stronger in requiring all major housing development to make provision for affordable housing including that for social rent.

Council expresses concern that at the heart of the draft NPPF is the weak definition of sustainable development which emphasises the primacy of business and housing development over almost all considerations. Oxford City Council is concerned that, notwithstanding having an approved Core Strategy, there will be increased pressures on Oxford's green open spaces, transport system and community facilities from developers being able to suggest that virtually any project is sustainable.

Council believes that there needs to be a stronger balance between the three pillars of sustainability throughout the document.

The NPPF advises against the 'long-term' protection of employment land or floorspace; instead it advocates the consideration of alternative uses to be assessed 'on their merits'. This advice does not allow Local Authorities such as Oxford to recognise local circumstances.

Council believes that there should be recognition that the provision of employment land is an essential part of the infrastructure requirements for an area.

Council express concern that in the transitional period, until new local plans are in place and are confirmed to be in conformity with the NPPF, there is a risk of a policy vacuum and for that reason argues for a presumption that existing local planning policies are in conformity with the NPPF, unless this is clearly not to be the case.

Council notes the draft NPPF recognises the 'duty to cooperate' on planning issues. This promotes collaborative working on strategic issues across local boundaries. This is particularly important in the case of two tier areas, such as Oxfordshire which has County and District authorities. But Council believes the 'duty to co-operate' simply will not work if different local authorities have different policy positions which are irreconcilable.

Council believes that the duty to cooperate needs strengthening.

Council asks the Chief Executive to ensure that these points are put forward as part of the Council's response to the draft NPPF.

The mover of the substantive Motion, Councillor David Williams did not accept the amendment and following a debate, council voted and the amended Motion was adopted.

(10) Feed in Tariff – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams, seconded by Councillor Dick Wolff)

Councillor David Williams declared a personal interest as he had recently installed solar panels at his property.

Councillor Elise Benjamin declared a personal interest as she had solar panels installed at her property.

This Council is of the belief that the reduction in the solar tariff feed in rate from 43p per kilowatt hour to 21p and bringing forward the implementation date twice recently announced by the Coalition Government will have a profound effect on the solar power companies not only here in Oxford but also nationally and will dramatically undermine the potential of achieving even the very modest targets set by the previous Labour Government for reducing carbon emissions by 2020.

The Chief Executive therefore is directed to write to the Secretary State indicating the Council's concern on this issue and asking that reduction in the tariff rate be postponed.

Councillor David Williams moved an amendment to include the following words at the end of the substantive Motion:

Council:

- (1) Notes that at least 145 households in Oxford have installed solar power since the introduction of the Feed-in Tariffs scheme under the last Labour Government;*
- (2) Believes that solar power gives families greater control over their energy bills and will help Oxford meet our renewable energy targets and reduce our carbon emissions;*
- (3) Regrets the Government's planned cuts to Feed-in Tariffs which put scores of solar industry jobs in the Oxford area at risk and exclude nearly nine out of ten families in Oxford from installing solar power;*
- (4) Further regrets the cuts to multi-installation tariffs, which will hit this Council, local housing associations and Oxford's low carbon community groups and make solar power the preserve of a wealthy few;*
- (5) Calls on the Coalition Government to rethink their devastating cuts to Feed-in Tariffs.*

Councillor Jean Fooks moved an amendment to:

- (1) Delete all of the words after 'Coalition Government', in the first and second paragraphs and insert the words 'is causing problems for suppliers and local authorities alike.'*
- (2) Insert the following new paragraphs:*

Council notes that whereas previous Labour and Conservative Governments banned councils from exporting electricity to the national grid, the current government, following Liberal Democrat pressure, changed the law so councils could export electricity from PV and other renewable sources.

Council further notes the government consultation on changes to the 'Feed in Tariff' scheme, which is helping to fund these installations, and is concerned that this halving of the tariff at short notice will reduce the systems being installed and will mean fewer jobs will be created.

Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, and relevant Ministers of State asking that:

- 1. The Tariff is reduced progressively over a longer period to enable the industry and householders to adjust but not before April 2012.*
- 2. A Community Tariff is established, ensuring Councils and other Social Housing providers are excluded from the lower Tariff proposed for multi-installations, so that more households in fuel poverty can benefit from free electricity.*

The Mover of the substantive Motion, Councillor David Williams accepted the amendment by himself, but did not accept the amendment by Councillor Jean Fooks. Following a debate, council voted and the Motion as amended by himself was adopted as follows:

This Council is of the belief that the reduction in the solar tariff feed in rate from 43p per kilowatt hour to 21p and bringing forward the implementation date twice recently announced by the Coalition Government will have a profound effect on the solar power companies not only here in Oxford but also nationally and will dramatically undermine the potential of achieving even the very modest targets set by the previous Labour Government for reducing carbon emissions by 2020.

The Chief Executive therefore is directed to write to the Secretary of State indicating the Councils concern on this issue and asking that reduction in the tariff rate be postponed.

- (1) Notes that at least 145 households in Oxford have installed solar power since the introduction of the Feed-in Tariffs scheme under the last Labour Government;
- (2) Believes that solar power gives families greater control over their energy bills and will help Oxford meet our renewable energy targets and reduce our carbon emissions;
- (3) Regrets the Government's planned cuts to Feed-in Tariffs which put scores of solar industry jobs in the Oxford area at risk and exclude nearly nine out ten families in Oxford from installing solar power;
- (4) Further regrets the cuts to multi-installation tariffs, which will hit this Council, local housing associations and Oxford's low carbon community groups and make solar power the reserve of a wealthy few;

- (5) Calls on the Coalition Government to rethink their devastating cuts to Feed-in Tariffs.

(11) Cut to Feed-in Tariff – (Proposer – Councillor John Tanner, seconded by Councillor Van Coulter)

Councillor David Williams declared a personal interest as he had recently installed solar panels at his property.

Councillor Elise Benjamin declared a personal interest as she had solar panels installed at her property.

Council:

- (1) Notes that at least 145 households in Oxford have installed solar power since the introduction of the Feed-in Tariffs scheme under the last Labour Government;
- (2) Believes that solar power gives families greater control over their energy bills and will help Oxford meet our renewable energy targets and reduce our carbon emissions;
- (3) Regrets the Government's planned cuts to Feed-in Tariffs which put scores of solar industry jobs in the Oxford area at risk and exclude nearly nine out of ten families in Oxford from installing solar power;
- (4) Further regrets the cuts to multi-installation tariffs, which will hit this Council, local housing associations and Oxford's low carbon community groups and make solar power the preserve of a wealthy few;
- (5) Calls on the Coalition Government to rethink their devastating cuts to Feed-in Tariffs.

Following a debate, Council voted and the Motion was adopted.

(12) Strike Action – (Proposer Councillor John Tanner, Seconded by Councillor Mike Rowley)

- (1) This Council believes that all employees, both private and public, should have decent pensions. Elderly people who have worked hard all their lives should not be forced into poverty in their declining years.
- (2) We regret the disruption caused to public services on 30th November. But that day of action demonstrated just how valuable are the services provided by local government staff, teachers, National Health Service employees and other public sector workers. We recognise that for local government employees, whose wages have been frozen, a cut in pension benefits is the last straw.

- (3) We applaud those dedicated public servants, including our own employees, who were prepared to lose a day's pay in order to campaign for decent pensions and proper services for the public.
- (4) It is unreasonable to ask employees to pay more, work longer and get less when many public pension funds are already fully funded. The public sector has a responsibility to show others what it is to be good employers, to pay decent wages and provide proper pensions.
- (5) We call on the Coalition Government to
 - (a) Negotiate just pension settlements with the public sector unions;
 - (b) Support the local government employers in providing good pensions for local government workers;
 - (c) Encourage private employers to provide pensions at least as good as the public sector.

Councillor David Williams submitted an amendment to delete words in section (5) and replace with the following words:

We call on the Government to:

- (a) *To abandon the present round of negotiations designed to reduce public sector pensions initiated by the previous Labour Government.*
- (b) *To recognise that the recommendations to dramatically reduce public sector pensions by Lord Hutton previously the Labour Secretary of State for Work and Pensions were flawed and that the level of public sector pensions (which are not high by European standards) can easily be sustained by the existing economy.*
- (c) *To acknowledge that the cuts in pension provision proposed firstly by Labour's Alistair Darling and continued by the Liberal Democrat Danny Alexander will have a dramatic effect on local government services, secure pensions being an important motivational factor amongst the workforce.*
- (d) *To recognise that public sector pensions, low as they are, should in fact be a bench mark that the private sector should aspire to copy and that Government policy should be focused not at dramatically cutting public sector pensions as envisaged by the previous Labour Government but in increasing pension provision in the private sector.*

Councillor John Tanner's Motion on Notice was not considered, nor was Councillor David William's amendment as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(13) Opposition to Right to Buy – (Proposer – Councillor David Rundle, seconded by Councillor Stuart McCready)

This Council notes the announcement at the Autumn's Conservative Party Conference of a renewal of the Thatcherite policy of Right to Buy (RTB) and its subsequent inclusion as a proposal in the Government's Housing Strategy.

This Council also notes the long-standing cross-party opposition to RTB with its impact of decreasing the social housing stock in our city which has a very real housing crisis.

This Council further notes the aspiration in the Government's Housing Strategy to offset the loss of social housing via RTB by provision of replacement dwellings, but not necessarily in the same part of the country. This Council does not accept that this provides sufficient safeguard against the damaging effects of RTB.

This Council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to ensure that there is a robust response to the consultation on this proposed policy, restating Oxford's reasoned opposition to RTB. That response should express opposition in principle to the policy and also underline the special situation of Oxford which would mean a return to RTB would make our city suffer more than most.

Councillor David Williams submitted an amendment as follows:

To delete the word "Government" where it appears and to replace with the words "Coalition Government"

To added an additional paragraph as follows:

Council Officers will investigate the option of establishing a Cooperative Trust to manage all out Council house stock as suggested by the Local Authority Cooperative Network and the Rochdale model if that will circumvent the RTB provisions to be announced by the Secretary of State and thereby retain a form of social housing in Oxford.

Councillor David Rundle's Motion on Notice was not considered, nor was Councillor David William's amendment as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(14) Affordable Housing Provision – (Proposer – Councillor Van Coulter)

Council notes that Britain is gripped by a growing housing crisis.

Whereas sixty thousand new affordable homes were planned, financed and started in the last six months of the Labour Government, only 454 affordable homes were started under the Tory led coalition government for the six months ending September 2011.

This is the consequence of the introduction by the coalition government of a radically different model for funding the building of new affordable

homes. This model significantly reduced grants available – indeed, funding was slashed by sixty-three percent.

Our housing crisis is symptomatic of miserably inadequate policies from this out of touch government – policies that fail Britain and fail Oxford.

This Council condemns the coalition government for imposing policies that cause significant hardship for many and notes with concern that statutory homelessness increased by 10.3 percent in England, and by 17.1 percent in Oxford, within the year ending April 2011.

Councillor David Williams submitted an amendment as follows:

- (1) *To add the following words after the word “crisis” in the first paragraph: “that has been developing over the last 20 years caused by a lack of real investment by this Coalition Government and the previous Labour Government”*
- (2) *To include a new fourth paragraph as follows: “Clearly developers are responding to the weakness of the economy by reducing the number of housing starts and therefore the number of affordable homes over the last twelve months. Given this fact Government should come to terms with the objective reality that following the previous Labour Governments philosophy of reliance on the private sector to deliver social housing will not work.”*
- (3) *To include a new fourth paragraph as follows: “Government ministers should recognise that what is needed is a direct building programme financed via Local Government and Housing Associations as the real way to provide the desperately needed social housing.”*
- (4) *To amend the existing fifth paragraph by deleting the words “out of touch government” and replace with the words “and the previous government”*
- (5) *To amend the final paragraph to delete all the words after the word “policies” and replace with the following words “such as reduction in Housing Benefit and reintroduction of massive discounts to the Right to Buy which will significantly increase hardship for a great many already increasing homelessness in Oxford by over 17% in one year.*

Councillor Van Coulter’s Motion on Notice was not considered, nor was Councillor David William’s amendment as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

78. REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT ORGANISATIONS THE COUNCIL IS REPRESENTED ON

This item was deferred when Council adjourned and will be considered when Council reconvenes at a future date. (Minute 71 refers).

79. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 10.37 pm

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Minute Item 62

Thank you this opportunity to give a short presentation as to why the proposed Oxford Horse Drawn Carriage Scheme should not be given the go-ahead in this evening's vote.

I'm Dene Stansall, Horse Consultant to Animal Aid. I am a horse owner and I have a British Horse Society qualification. My work has involved lecturing the RSPCA's Scientific, Technical and Academic Committee; Parliament's All-Party Group for Animal Welfare; and Post Graduate Master of Science Degree Students whom are seeking careers in the equine industry.

As an organization Animal Aid's information, research and opinion is used by all major newspapers, radio and television. Indeed our work receives widespread international acknowledgement. For example, this month on the subject of horses we corresponded with Minister of Agriculture in Israel and as a consequence our views were published in the Jerusalem Post.

As an individual I also have a concern for road safety. And last year as part of the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Team we were honored to receive an International Road Safety Award from Prince Michael of Kent, for services that have helped to reduce road deaths in Lincolnshire, particularly that of young drivers.

I have a broad knowledge of horses and road safety issues. I therefore feel it is most appropriate as a representative of Animal Aid to give my views on this proposal.

The areas that I wish to very briefly draw your attention to include: horse welfare, veterinary inspections, the proposed route and public safety.

I looked in depth at the draft Byelaws relating to horse welfare for this proposal and it offers no welfare protection, in fact quite the contrary.

For instance, one of the most important aspects to understand is that of temperature control in working horses – which alarmingly isn't even covered in the Byelaws. We all know about leaving dogs in cars on a hot day – they can very soon die. Well, horses are temperature sensitive too. Horses warm quickly with work and find heat loss difficult. In the Byelaws there is no provision for this. The proposal has the horses working a seven and a half hour day during the height of summer. Initially on Sundays and if financially successful the company would want to operate on Saturdays and then throughout the week. In New York, where they have the most appalling welfare standards for their carriage horses, they have at least a maximum temperature limit after which horse must stop work, that being 89 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures in Oxford will go above this during the summer months, yet there is no such provision for the Oxford horses.

Again with reference to temperature control, or thermoregulation, the provision of a 30-minute break between working hours in the operator's proposal is inadequate. A lay-person I'm sure would think that a standing horse could cool down within a half hour after two hours' work, but this is wrong, especially during hot weather without a

breeze. When a hot or warm horse stands still – they actually get hotter – and this kills horses as it does dogs. Horses need to lose heat via convection and radiation. For convection to happen they would need to be unharnessed and continually walked around and preferably have plenty of water thrown over them. Could this realistically be done amidst Oxford's busy city centre environment?

For heat loss via radiation they require shade. At the pick-up and resting point for the horses on Broad Street there is no provision for shade from the sun or cover from rain.

Add to this there is no mention of record keeping or inspection of the hours worked and length of rest periods for each horse. I'm amazed at this!

But what makes this all the more worrying is that the horses to be used are black coloured Friesians. As you will know, black absorbs heat by gaining radiant heat from the surrounding environment. So, be in no doubt, these horses will suffer heat stress. (An example of this was recently brought to my attention when public protests were taking place in New York after a WHITE carriage horse collapsed and died on the street in full public view.)

The question also arises: is the Friesian a suitable breed to pull large tourist carriages?

No. From their colour you can gather they're bred to pull funeral carriages or light gigs. Landau carriages designed for more than two people are best pulled by stronger breeds such as Cleveland Bays – as used by the Queen.

Moving on from temperature control, unlike cars that have their annual MOT, horses are not machines, their physical condition can change drastically from day to day. Therefore to give a green light of fitness to any horse on the strength of a Veterinary Certificate issued within the preceding twelve months as in Point 13 of the Byelaws is meaningless – and I cannot overstate the seriousness of this.

With reference to the route, large sections of are cobbled. Even a flat road surface is stress enough on any horse's legs but a cobbled surface could easily cause them to go lame, more so if that surface is wet, or as on Merton Street in poor repair. And inclines add further stress.

Friesian's are high stepping horses whom will NOT be expected to walk the route but to trot the whole of the supposedly 30 minute journey. And this is for two or three hours at a time! This breaches the duty-of-care and can cause unnecessary suffering; issues that relate to the Animal Welfare Act of 2006.

Furthermore, the narrowness of Turl Street is just not suitable for two horses and a carriage. Public safety would definitely be at risk. If a wheel sheered off having gone the wrong side of any of the many bollards along that narrow street the horses would panic, the carriage fail and who knows what chaos would ensue?

Something similar happened last year in York and I quote an eyewitness account

from the York Press:

"I saw the horse galloping down the road towards Monk Bar. People were jumping out of the way and fleeing, almost in a state of panic."

The proposed route also involves the large and long horse carriage going the entire way around the Plain roundabout at the end of Magdalen Bridge, and back over it again. The Plain has five very busy roads coming off it. It has had a reputation as an accident blackspot, as has the High Street also on the route, and Parks Road. This poses further dangers to pedestrians, cyclists, car drivers and the horses.

I have only just touched on the many problems that this proposal has. Only through a thorough review of all aspects of this proposal can any serious judgment be made as to its worth.

I would therefore urge the Council on the grounds of horse welfare and public safety to reject the proposal to allow a horse drawn carriage operation in Oxford or at least suspend such a decision until more clarity is forthcoming.

Thank you.

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Statement on behalf of Kevin Merry Carriages to be read at the council meeting 19th December

First of all I'd like to thank the full council for the opportunity to make a statement in support of our proposal.

We are very happy that the General Purposes Licensing committee have approved the proposal to provide horse drawn carriage rides in Oxford. It has taken over 2 years to reach this point and we are pleased that the committee are satisfied that this will be a positive contribution to the city.

Numerous meetings have taken place over the last 2 years and we have worked closely with the licensing team to make sure our proposal takes full consideration of the welfare of our 2 horses as well as those of the general public and road users.

We recognise that there have been a number of concerns over congestion and animal welfare, we fully understand these concerns, but as has been outlined many times the welfare of Kevin's horses has always been paramount to his business. In addition, we have absolutely no intention of operating more than 1 horse drawn carriage and given the route that has been agreed upon, we feel that there will be minimal impact on traffic congestion. The speed limit for traffic in the city centre is 20 mph, normal travelling speed for our carriage is 12 mph which represents only 8 mph less than the maximum speed other road users are allowed to travel at. If there was the odd occasion where we experienced a "tail back", there are numerous places en route that Kevin would be able to pull over. In addition, we have sought and listened to the advice of the highways dept and licensing team. For example, in the initial proposal the route included Turl Street – it was suggested that given this was a narrow right of way, albeit restricted, it might potentially cause congestion. On the advice of the Highways dept. the route returns to Broad Street through Queens lane, a far quiet and safer route.

Regarding safety, we recognise that having large animals in a city centre with many pedestrians, will inevitably lead to health & safety concerns. Friesian horses are, by nature, compliant creatures and have been bred for over 300 years specifically to pull carriages. Kevin's horses have been under his guidance and instruction for many years. He has over 30 years experience of working with horses, including the breaking in of horses for some of the most highly regarded racing stables in the world. This is a practice that requires patience, a high level of skill and, most importantly, a finely tuned sense of empathy with horses. During the course of Kevin's 10 year history of running his horse and carriage business, he has never experienced a horse getting out of control. However, in the highly unlikely occurrence of such an event, few people are better placed than Kevin to manage the situation swiftly and safely. Our horses are very experienced with traffic, the recently introduced 20 mph speed limit within the city will make carriage travel even safer and as an extra precaution, Kevin has even fitted disc brakes to the wheels of the carriages.

There were also concerns over the route suggesting that 2/3rds of it was on cobbled streets potentially causing painful bruised soles of the horses feet. Cobbled streets in fact make up around 15% of the route - and were introduced some 500 years ago specifically to improve the welfare and safety of horses and passengers when pulling carriages. Horses are far more likely to experience bruised soles if travelling over large loose stones or gravel.

In opposition to our proposal, cases have been cited to suggest horses running amock and collapsing through heat exhaustion is commonplace. It is not. We are not denying that this has ever happened but in those extremely rare incidents it is because of unscrupulous often unlicensed traders sacrificing welfare for profit. Kevin's horses always receive ample attention, feed, water and rest. The carriage rides will take place for a maximum of 7.5 hours per day and following each 30 minute ride will take a 30 minute rest stop.

Kevin's horses have always been treated with respect and dignity not purely as a commercial commodity. In fact throughout Kevin's working life, each month a portion of his profits are sent to a charity set up specifically to assist in rehabilitation of maltreated horses.

There have also been concerns raised over the horse droppings. Again there will only ever be two horses involved therefore this should not represent a major issue. Nevertheless, we have stated that the droppings would be collected at the end of each day; should the council insist that they are collected after each route, then we'll be happy to do so. There will follow a 30 minute rest period between rides so there would be ample time to do so by the driver's assistant.

And so to the future, we hope that you will agree with the general purposes licensing committee who after serious and measured consideration have approved the proposal. We are confident that our business will resonate well with Oxford's rich history, will help attract tourists and visitors which will ultimately be to the benefit of both Oxford's businesses and citizens alike.

The Link Road to Northway from New Barton

We are grateful of this opportunity to bring our views to the Full Council.

Despite your opinion to the contrary, we in Northway have had little or no consultation about the proposed link road with the new development at Barton, only gaining a voice on the Barton and Northway Working Group in September of this year.

Since we became aware of the proposed link road we have leafleted Northway estate several times and 190 leaflets voicing opposition to the link road and supporting a left in, left out from Barton on to the A40 were received. Consequently, we are very disappointed to see that these leaflets are referred to on page 303, paragraph 7 of the Submissions Document in such a misleading way; even going so far as to suggest that we support a link road and greater integration.

In our opinion this is a blatant untruth. As you know well, we have worked tirelessly to make the Council aware of the huge opposition to the link road into Northway but do not feel that you are listening to anything that is contrary to your plans. In our view you wilfully printed this untruth in an attempt to influence the Council's perception of Northway's strong feeling against the link road. How can you misconstrue our campaigning against the link and conclude that we are in favour of it?

In respect to the low response rate from Northway to the June 2011 Barton Area Action Plan we have found that most people in Northway did not receive a copy. Additionally, Mr Crofton Briggs has admitted to us that the title of the document, in his words, "might have been misleading as it did not mention Northway".

We are surprised to find a change in the designated area of development between the Barton Action Plans of June 2010 and June 2011. On page 3 of the 2010 action plan the map details the precise area for development and

Northway is mentioned in a throw-away comment but with no mention of a link road. The 2011 document continues to be called the Barton Area Action Plan but has been expanded to incorporate Northway and Old Headington within the development, presumably to alleviate the traffic problems that an expansion of Barton will pose.

Residents of Barton have previously shown no wish to integrate with Northway until they had to consider the extra traffic from the new development concluding that a link road through Northway would be best, without giving any consideration as to how the traffic would get out of Northway itself. Why are you even considering bringing buses from Barton through Northway? Barton already has a more than adequate service which could easily be extended through the development. Furthermore there is a perfectly viable alternative for bringing traffic on and off the by-pass via a left in, left out slip road onto the A40.

In your planning documents you strongly support the preservation of green space within Barton but intend to diminish the limited amount of green space that we have within Northway. It would require the felling of trees which provide a buffer to the exhaust fumes and continuous noise from the by-pass, bringing extra traffic into quiet residential roads, not intended for heavy traffic. This will cause increased pollution, danger to residents and their children and would be detrimental to our wellbeing and to the value of our houses. You place great emphasis on the new Barton development having safe, quiet and unpolluted roads for their children, whilst robbing our children of these very things.

According to the Core Strategy Proposal Map 2011 the green space of Foxwell Drive is protected as a sports and recreational green space and has the designation of SR2 and SR 5. The trees which constitute our noise and pollution buffer are protected by policies NE15 and NE16. Additionally, the Council for the Protection of Rural England have stated that it is a wildlife corridor. It is a valuable green asset to this estate and should not be expropriated by anyone.

With the new developments at Dora Carr Close, Westlands Drive and Ruskin Fields you are proposing to increase the traffic within Northway by 30%. Surely this is a big enough change without adding any more traffic.

We are advised that sewerage from the new development could cause a problem to our worn-out sewerage system. Presumably you are aware of the current sewerage problems including several serious leaks in Stockleys Road during the last few months?

In conclusion Northway is a very nice estate with little crime or vandalism. It is a good neighbourhood in which to live. Why do you wish to spoil it? You will just move the traffic congestion from one place to another. A new development in one place should not be to the detriment of another and we can see absolutely no benefit to Northway Estate.

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Full Council meeting 19/12/2011

Address to Agenda Item 22 regarding Ruskin College's proposal to include two fields in the BAAP, made on behalf of the Ruskin Fields Group, a subcommittee of the Friends of Old Headington, and in support of officers' recommendations.

To all Councillors:

We do not dispute the City's need for housing, and plans for the land at Barton to provide up to 1200 homes will make a real difference. However, we strongly disagree with Ruskin's assertions that their fields should be developed as part of these same plans and that this could be done without detriment to the Old Headington conservation area.

There is a long history of protection of these fields from development and it's worth looking at briefly here before considering a proposal which would change the area irretrievably.

In 1933 the first threat to develop the meadows we know now as the Ruskin Fields was averted because your predecessors here in the City Council refused an application submitted by a firm of builders who had recently purchased the house and land.

In the 1940s the next owner safeguarded the fields with covenants restricting building.

These covenants – still in place today – don't necessarily have great significance in planning terms, but they are evidence of a long-standing recognition of the value of keeping the fields as green open spaces.

Nor is it just past owners and present neighbours who regard the fields as special.

In 1994 the City Council stated that “the fields had no development potential and should properly be kept permanently open to preserve the setting of the northern edge of Old Headington”.

In 1998 the fields were brought into the conservation area, and given a “Special Open Space” designation.

In 2009 their value as a key feature of the area was restated by Ruskin College; this is what they said: ‘The site bears a close relationship with the village of Old Headington from which you can catch distant glimpses of the Rookery through the seasonally changing trees. It also bears a wider relationship with the surrounding fields and rural landscape. The adjacent fields to the north, expressed through a different language of planting in their rural setting, are one of the most important features’. (*Design and Access Statement* 09/00636/FUL (March 2009)).

This year, in July, The Conservation Area Appraisal for Old Headington was commended and adopted by Council. That document makes it clear that all the Ruskin Fields play a vital

role in setting the village of Old Headington within its rural context as well as providing an open green space which gives the whole area its special character.

Now, near the end of 2011 the Planning Policy team has decided to exclude the Ruskin fields from both the Draft Submission for the BAAP and from the Sites and Housing DPD on the grounds that they are not – for planning and conservation reasons - suitable for development.

Oxford is a national asset for its architecture, history, and beauty, but also for its green “spaces in between” which provide the setting for so many of its listed buildings and key features. The Ruskin Fields are the green “space in between” for Headington, and an important survivor of pasturage from a rural landscape, which today gives Old Headington its special character.

The fields also provide a green buffer between the conservation area and the A40; and we need to bear in mind that these and all the other fields within the ring-road round Oxford are vital not just as a natural local amenity but as providing the wider landscape setting of Oxford; they must be preserved if at all possible.

If Ruskin’s proposed development is allowed here, in a conservation area, many other green spaces will be brought under threat, and the long tradition of valuing these particular fields for what they are: an entirely natural uncultivated green space within the City boundary will be at an end.

You are the latest custodians of the historic village that is Old Headington; its rural character is a precious inheritance which the Ruskin proposal would irretrievably damage. The planning officers have recognized this in their recommendations to Councillors and on behalf of the inhabitants of Old Headington I would urge you all to support that decision this evening.

Thank you.

Speaker to be drawn from one of these three:

Veronica Hurst (9 Stoke Place, OX3 9BX)

Zoe Traill (10 St. Andrew’s Road, OX3 9DL)

Clive Hurst (9 Stoke Place, OX3 9BX)

FULL COUNCIL MEETING, 19th December 2011 – Address in respect of Agenda Item 21. Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD) Proposed Submission Draft and Item 22. Barton AAP Proposed Submission Draft.

I want to talk to you about the proposed Ruskin Fields housing development which has been left out of both the housing documents you are looking at tonight: the Barton Area Action Plan and the Sites and Housing Development Plan Document (DPD).

Each of you has the power to make this a conscience vote tonight by choosing between two neglected, soggy fields versus homes for 150 households, at least 75 of which would be affordable.

What will you say to those 75 individuals or families when they come asking you why they have nowhere to live and why a site that could provide affordable homes is not doing so?

- You may say: '***We were told that access would be a problem***'. We have put forward two access arrangements. The A40 left in, left out arrangement is, in fact, the same method of access on to a busy dual carriageway as that proposed for a site that is included within the allocation document, hence that argument does not hold water.
- You may say: '***We were worried about the density of housing***'. In fact, the proposed Headington Meads development on Ruskin Fields runs at 40 - 45 dwellings per hectare and the specific Core Strategy Policy CP6 seeks developments that have a density of a minimum 40 dwellings per hectare, to ensure efficient use of the land. Therefore, our development complies with this and that argument also falls.
- You may say: '***Ruskin Fields are in a Conservation Area***'. The aim of Conservation Area status is not to thwart development but to ensure that development is appropriate for the location. Our Heritage Statement has demonstrated the neutral impact of our development in conservation terms. We would say Ruskin Fields is no more sensitive than many sites included within the sites and housing document. Other sites have been allocated that have far graver site constraints. Hence that argument bears no weight.
- You may say: '***We were scared it would interfere with our other plans***'. In actual fact, it has always made more sense to think about the Barton AAP and Ruskin Fields together

because all the infrastructure – roads, sewers, a district heating scheme and so on – applies to the whole area thereabouts, not just to one small part of it.

All of these issues, though important, pale into insignificance when people are homeless and inadequately housed. The development of Ruskin Fields will not cause any significant harm to the local area; indeed a development of the highest quality that respects the natural environment and the character of Old Headington Conservation Area will be an asset to the area.

Ruskin Fields has been described as a sensitive site in terms of planning. Having reviewed the site allocation document I think it is very difficult to get away from ‘sensitive sites’ in Oxford. Within the 17-site allocation specifically for housing alone, we have identified 7 that have significant site constraints: from residential allocation in Flood Zone 3b to issues concerning SSSI, Conservation Areas and Green Belt Land.

One greenfield site, allocated, on the southern edge of the city is entirely divorced from any existing residential area, with no pedestrian or cycle links and is adjoined by a railway line and dual carriageway. The Council has described the site as being ‘very segregated from neighbouring communities’ and, in fact, it was dismissed as inappropriate for residential development by an earlier Inspector. At the time, the Inspector stated that, in the event that additional housing land was required, there should be a comparative assessment of other sites. I cannot believe that Ruskin Fields has ever been compared to this site. If it had, it would surely have been included within the site allocation document.

With this backdrop, I am at a loss why it would appear that Ruskin Fields has been considered to be such a sensitive site that it did not warrant even a passing mention in the allocation document or accompanying papers.

As an aside to this, there has been lots of discussion over the resulting loss of green space if Ruskin Fields are developed. So, I am surprised that the council is proceeding with the loss of four sports fields to be replaced by housing, the justification being the ‘the need and benefit of new housing’.

The bedrock of the planning process has always been to determine whether the benefits of a development outweigh any perceived or real harm it might cause. Ruskin is no more a sensitive site than many others that the Council has chosen to include within the allocation document. The

benefits of developing Ruskin Fields for housing are, on the other hand, real, immediate and substantial. They relate to providing desperately needed housing.

Oxford has been described as a city with London house prices and Midlands wages. 68% of all households in Oxford have an income below that required to buy a house, and have to rely on market-level rent. This means an annual shortfall of between 1,981 and 4,884 affordable homes in Oxford. The Sites and Housing DPD Affordable Housing Background Paper sums the situation up: 'the rate at which affordable housing is built in Oxford will never keep up with the new and existing need for affordable homes'. This is a worrying scenario; indeed, it is shameful in a such a humane and civilized city in the 21st century.

The same background paper demonstrated a heavy skew towards the development of smaller sites, particularly of sites of 1-4 dwellings, with the majority of sites being developed below the affordable housing threshold of 10 houses; These smaller sites are invaluable in increasing housing stock, but the bottom line is that, at the moment, most of the housing developments in Oxford do not contribute to affordable housing. It is the larger sites that do - sites such as that at Ruskin Fields.

You have an opportunity tonight, to add 150 units to the Oxford housing market and, most significantly, up to 75 desperately need affordable homes for the working people of Oxford. You may think that we have placed too much emphasis on affordable housing; our answer to that is, "someone has to if you will not"

The time has come to vote with your heart – to vote with your conscience. Don't allow a development opportunity to be missed.

Would a brave soul please move this evening to include Ruskin Fields in either the Barton Area Action Plan and/or the Site Allocation and Housing DPD and would a second brave soul please second this. Would every one of you then please think long and hard what you are doing here tonight. You have it in your power to do real good, to make a genuine difference to people who are homeless or inadequately housed. That's what you were elected for. Now it's up to you.

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**Statement by Richard English on behalf of six East Oxford Residents' Associations and
75 individual Oxford residents on the inclusion of two sites in the Bartlemas
Conservation Area in the Sites and Housing Development Plan**

December 2011

My name is Richard English and I am a resident of East Oxford. In making this appeal I am speaking on behalf of six residents' associations in East Oxford and an additional 75 Oxford residents who have signed this statement..

Tonight the City Council is asked to approve the Proposed Sites and Housing Development Plan for public consultation.

We appeal to the council to support a proposed amendment by Councillor Nuala Young to this document in respect to two sites within the Bartlemas Conservation Area - the Bartlemas Nursery School and the East Oxford Bowls Club.

We are grateful to the City Council for listening carefully and responding to the local community's views and interest in these two sites.

However residents are still very concerned on the need for adequate protection for the Conservation Area and its historic building as well as the need for positive proposals to bring the sites back into active community use.

The two sites play a vital role in helping to preserve the unique rural, open and secluded setting of the Conservation Area and the ancient buildings – the Grade 1 14th century chapel and two Grade 2* buildings that make up this ancient hamlet founded in 1126 by Henry I as a leper hospital. There is no place like it in any urban area in Oxford or anywhere else across the UK and it must be protected at all costs. We urge the Council to give full weight to the findings of the Bartlemas Conservation Area Appraisal, which was the result of extensive consultation with all interested parties and key stakeholders.

The Bartlemas Conservation Area Appraisal states: "Bartlemas is one of the hidden treasures of Oxford, described by the Planning Inspector in 1986 as a 'rare and beautiful enclave which must be preserved'" and "The conservation area benefits from a number of different uses: residential, religious, gardening/recreational and sporting. It is vital that any future management of this area maintains the established balance of uses."

As East Oxford residents we know this beautiful place very well and are convinced that the best option for the redevelopment of the Nursery site is for a low rise day-time community facility. Development options on this site are highly constrained by the historic buildings and their setting and by existing trees, an ancient boundary ditch and access issues. Any development, therefore, should be no larger than the existing nursery footprint and single storey in height and continue to act as a buffer of 'open visible space' as highlighted by two past Planning Appeal Inspectors' when refusing residential proposals for this site in 2009 and 2011.

We believe that the Bowling Green's Local Plan designation (SR2) as a recreational or sporting facility should be confirmed across the whole site – both bowling green and pavilion. This will be in line with the clear wording in the Conservation Area Appraisal on the site's importance to the setting. Any use must contribute to maintaining the rural, open and secluded nature of the Conservation Area and act as an essential buffer between the Cowley Road and the areas historic core and the allotments within it. To do this any proposed recreational buildings on the site must be low impact and single story and views into the conservation area ensured by open green spaces which have been given special attention by past Planning Inspectors and the Conservation Area Appraisal.

We urge the City Council to allocate these sites as suitable for low impact community use for the Nursery site and community recreational use for the Bowling Green. Only in this way will their value as an integral part of the Bartlemas Conservation Area and the setting of the historic buildings be preserved and enhanced and provide benefits to the community and the City.

Thank you

My name is Nigel Gibson, and as part of this address I will be presenting a petition asking the Council to reconsider the decision to build a new swimming pool in Blackbird Leys and close both Temple Cowley Leisure Centre and the existing Blackbird Leys swimming pool. This petition demonstrates yet again the strength of feeling throughout Oxford that the Council is ignoring the views of the people who pay for these services.

The Council decided, in the City Executive Board meeting on the 21st July of this year, to move ahead and build a new 25m, non-Olympic swimming pool at Blackbird Leys for an ever-escalating cost that is now fast approaching £10m, knowing full well that £3m would refurbish and improve both the Temple Cowley Leisure Centre and the existing swimming pool in Blackbird Leys.

The Council's decision was made without properly consulting with the public, who pay for these services through their council tax, and also through the admission charges when they actually use these facilities, and without considering properly the effect that closure of Temple Cowley Leisure Centre will have on a range of minority groups. The decision was also made on the basis of information provided by the council which the Campaign team, and many members of the public, have pointed out is a combination of misleading, inaccurate, incomplete and untrue. An excellent example is the way in which the Council issued a side note to one of my last addresses to Council, attempting to point out the 'truth' of what they are saying – they have been unable to prove any of their points, simply because the Campaign is evidence based, using mostly information from the Council itself.

There is simply no evidence of demand for a new swimming pool in Blackbird Leys. The existing swimming pool, much appreciated by those who do use it, is only open to the public for 10 hours a week and there is no-one asking for it to be open longer. Building in Blackbird Leys will take away yet more green space, already much lower than the Council's own target for green space in the community. It will cause enormous traffic problems as people are forced to drive down already congested roads if the desk-based forecast by Fusion Lifestyle of 400,000 visits a year is reached. It will do nothing to support the Council's aspirations to get more people out of their cars and walk or cycle to their leisure centre – only Blackbird Leys residents and possibly a few people from the fringes of the estate will be able to walk there, and this is supposed to be a facility for people across the whole of the city, like Temple Cowley Leisure Centre is at present. Thousands of people in East Oxford and beyond, existing users at Temple Cowley, will be disenfranchised through this cut in services by the Labour administration. And it flies in the face of the Council's own Core Strategy, which demands that a new swimming pool should be built in a Primary

District Centre ie Temple Cowley, in preference to a District Centre, ie Blackbird Leys. The Council Core Strategy also says that closure of a centre can only happen if there is a replacement in the immediate area, and there is no sign of the Council providing another swimming pool, diving pool, sauna, steam room, gym and exercise studio in Temple Cowley.

The consultation on how sites will be developed if they became free has recently been completed. And we find that in this exercise, yet again, the democratic will has been ignored. At both the Temple Cowley Leisure Centre site, and also the Cowley Marsh works, people said they wanted leisure facilities to be kept or provided; the planning officers' recommendations ignore these comments completely, and don't even consider them. Instead, it is yet more new housing in highly inappropriate areas – there is absolutely no point in building more student accommodation, or even residential homes, if the infrastructure and amenities are not there to support them. Even Brookes University students don't want more student accommodation – they would rather live out in the community and have a swimming pool and gym local to them.

The decision in July, and the Council's continued intransigence despite repeated informal requests, has prompted a number of actions by the public, and despite the unwarranted criticism from both Council and the media, they are all completely justified democratic processes.

The first of these is an application by a group of local residents in Blackbird Leys, the 'Town Green 14', supported by many more residents, for Town Green status for the park on which the Council wants to build the proposed new swimming pool. The submission is in, and an initial decision is awaited by the County Council.

And because the Labour Council has ignored the public, by not consulting or listening to the people who would be affected by its proposed cuts to services in East Oxford, the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign is challenging its decision through the High Court and a Judicial Review. Anyone wanting more information can email savetcp@gmail.com or look at the website, <http://tiny.cc/savetcpblog>. And we are open for donations – it is completely wrong that the public can only challenge a Council decision if they have deep enough pockets. The fate of a generation should not depend on whether there is enough funding. Donations can be made direct into the following Bank Account: Sort Code 08-92-99, Account Name Save TCP, Account Number 6551 7499.

And finally, we have the latest petition. The first petition gathered over 12,000 (twelve thousand) signatures and is the largest ever in the history of Oxford. It was dismissed by Labour councillors as not really representing what people think, not being the whole of Oxford, and being easy to collect. We faced accusations that simply anyone would sign a petition, and that we had made signatures up. I find it appalling that Labour councillors would dismiss so readily a democratic process that was enacted in law by the last Labour government to provide us, the people, with a voice to be heard.

And when we have submitted petitions before, we have been accused of having less support for the Campaign because the numbers are so much lower. This is simply not true, and misses the point completely. The Council has set 1500 (fifteen hundred) signatures as the trigger for a debate in a Full Council meeting. If anyone has tried getting signatures, you will realize how difficult it is. Yet the Campaign team has found that on this issue, wanting to close Temple Cowley Leisure Centre in order to waste our money on a new swimming pool, we regularly have queues of people wanting to sign.

And so Lord Mayor, I would do two things – firstly, to ask Council to reconsider the decision to move ahead with its white elephant of a vanity project, and consult properly with those who actually pay for the services before committing our money, and to reconsider the decision to move ahead with its white elephant vanity project in Blackbird Leys - £9.5m on a new only-25m, non-Olympic swimming pool in a place where there is no evidence of demand simply doesn't make sense when £3m will refurbish and improve two existing facilities that are in a place where people want and use them.

Secondly, I am presenting this petition of over 1500 signatures to Council for debate at a future meeting – it represents the continuing demand of the people of Oxford that they be listened to, and consulted with properly before the Council commits large amounts of our money on projects that will not benefit the city.

The Campaign to keep Temple Cowley Leisure Centre open will continue for as long as there is support from the people of Oxford. The short time it has taken to gather over 1500 signatures for this latest petition demonstrates yet again the strength of feeling on this issue, and should be a wake-up call to councillors who simply have not been listening, or responding to the wishes of their voters.

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The Blackbird Leys 14 are still here and still campaigning for the park to be classed as a town green even though some members of this council continue to misinform the public.

On 16th November I attended a meeting on Blackbird Leys and we were reliably informed by a council member that if the application was successful then there would be no chance of building on it for twenty years. At this stage I could not restrain myself and had to inform the members of the public present the **truth** of the application.

My question is “Why do you persist in telling the public one thing when you are obviously told by your legal team something else”

Are we (who you are supposed to represent) only worthy of half truths and lies even when **you** are confident our application will not succeed.

Time and again I have been told that we are obstructing progress and our campaign is being orchestrated by the Save Temple Cowley Pool action group. This is blatantly not true we are only trying to protect our neighbourhood from unwanted development and the devastating effects of this construction. I have even heard there is a possibility the Ice rink could be relocated to here. What else will you foist upon the residents of Pegasus Road? And as regards playing football where will they be asked to move to because there will be no grass left.

It has never been our intention to prevent the modernisation of swimming provisions within the community but what must be considered is the harm such things have on the infrastructure. The proposed footfall for this new facility is around 400,000.

Even if this was the only structure on the site this would be over 1,000 people a day and the dedicated parking will not cope with such volumes. If you add the leisure centre footfall into the equation then this will be like trying to get a quart into the proverbial pint pot, it just won't work and the overflow of the vehicles will pour out onto the local streets which are bad enough as it is.

You don't live here so consider those who do and will be subjected to months of construction traffic, mess on the roads followed by the inability to park outside their own front door

I am sure 9 million pounds can be better used in support of the libraries, maintaining and improving present sport and exercise facilities, or youth projects within Oxford, in the ways that the community, not the Council, want.

I urge you to reconsider your actions and stop this construction. It is not too late to look again at alternatives to this development.

Jane Alexander

I am not here to talk about Temple Cowley Pools or Blackbird Leys Pool for a change but about all of you. I am here to talk about Oxford City Council. I have been asked in the past not to mention council officers by name as they are not able to reply during this meeting so I will restrict myself to talking about the process I have learnt about over the past couple of years since trying to express public views to the council.

I would ask that you have the respect to listen to me while I make this address. Having made several addresses before and witnessed others making addresses I am aware that many councillors see public addresses as a time to check their mobiles, write text messages, read through papers or even chat to other councillors. I consider this to be rude and disrespectful of the public who you are supposed to represent and who's interests you are supposed to be working for.

I shouldn't really be surprised now by the rudeness of some councillors though, as I have seen first hand and on many occasions, how much some councillors and some council officers seem to hate the public to express their own opinions. We the public have a right to be heard and listened to by you our 'representatives'.

The constitution used to state that the first duty of a Councillor was to their constituents. Not long after I pointed this out to my councillor Bob Timbs early in 2010, the Constitution was changed to remove that line. Some of you may not be aware, the council has now changed the Oxford's Constitution at least three times since our Save TCP campaign started in earnest. Did you know that? The Constitution which should be there to serve the public, now serves to protect the council from the public.

I have witnessed members of the Labour councillors making rude remarks about members of the public during Full Council meetings. I have witnessed the same Labour councillors making rude remarks about other councillors from other parties. This is so childish and pathetic. All councillors have the right to speak at these meetings and so there should never be any need to call out abuse and try to intimidate and put down others. The public, on the other hand, are given no right of reply to our questions and addresses when not dealt with adequately or when councillors give misleading responses or outright 'untruths' to what we say, knowing full well what they are doing.

Refusing to read documents and know the truth, is no excuse for telling lies. Then, there are the physical assaults which some members of the public have been subjected to, just for asking a councillor to tell the truth for example when Bob Timbs said 'The new pool (that was proposed for Blackbird Leys) would be bigger than the present Temple Cowley Pools'.

Anyone who had read the council documents would know that was not true and all of the councillors should have known that by November 2010 especially Cowley councillors, Bob Timbs and Bryan Keen.

Mary Clarkson apologised for her error after she read the documents following the same error, when she too stated that the new pool would be bigger at Full Council in 2011. John Tanner did not admit his error made at the same Full Council, he didn't even bother to reply.

A member of the public should not be in the position of having to correct a councillor's incorrect statements. If any councillor is not able to read and understand documents for themselves then others should make them aware of the facts in full in a way that they can understand. Any councillor with responsibility for a particular area should be capable of doing the job.

At the Cowley area meeting in November 2010, I asked Bob Timbs to correct what he was saying, that the proposed pool would not be bigger. Bryan Keen, who also did not seem to know the truth, decided to ignore the words of one of the council officers who suggested a suspension of the meeting to deal with my demanding truth from Bob Timbs.

Written Address To Council

Barton and Ruskin – Chalk and Cheese

Councillors

The Barton project carries a high degree of risk – financial, environmental and social, or simply partial failure.

Will housing so well located in the middle of the country on the edge of the city be snapped up by an army of consultants?

Will pinching tight one of the most important economic arteries of Oxford reduce economic growth?

Do we know the freeing up effect on the general housing market by the recent wave of new student accommodation?

What is the cumulative effect of hundreds of applications that turn one bedroom houses into two bedrooms, two bedrooms to three that clog Planningfinder every week?

Has the Council reviewed its housing stock for similar gains?

How will Barton help those on the housing register? The actual figure, excluding transfers, is approximately 4,600 of which approximately 60% are for one bedroom non family accommodation, clearly Barton with a 5-10% one bedroom housing is not intended for this.

A local family with a new arrival needs a three bedroom house, but frees a two bedroom one – has this been calculated?

What are the effects on housing demand caused by the downturn in a public sector city?

Can empty nesters living in a much loved house redolent with the memory of parted ones be given helping hand to share some of their space and supplement their income?

How about policies to free up the 12,000 employer parking spaces in the NE area for housing and reduce in-commuting?

Will workers relocating from further afield cause point loading on the transport network?

Why build in the city?

Ahh, says the wise man, to reduce the need to travel, Why? Ahh, says the wise man, to reduce emissions – but will stationary vehicles in the fourth most congested city in the UK emit more, longer, and more dangerously, directly into the lungs of deprived children below them at Barton?

How often has the school run, the wet day, the broken down car, cause havoc? Very slight changes in traffic volumes or circumstances can have severe impacts which even chaos theory and expert analysis cannot predict.

Perhaps the only blackberry and apple picking going on near Ruskin will be angry citizens in long queues who should be home with their families tweeting their Councillors, and not with “thx”

You don't dissolve poverty by concentrating it. Might it still be possible to spread deprivation and achieve genuinely mixed communities throughout the city?

All of the above are questions that must raise doubts - I don't know the answers, but more importantly, neither do you, but here is the point of all of the above:

The Ruskin development adds approximately 20% to the whole – making Barton work will be a tightrope walk, adding Ruskin will be a high wire act, piling risk on risk, negative on negative.

If it is included in BAAP, it will compromise the soundness of the whole. If it is allocated a site DPD, it will bring its plans to fruition far quicker than Barton, meaning the risks above will be borne by entirely by the public purse as the last cab off the rank.

There is one “chalk and cheese” fundamental difference between Barton and Ruskin – in the case of Barton there is a presumption in favour of development, for Ruskin a “clear and convincing” reason under PPS5 must exist for very substantial damage to a designated conservation asset.

It will only ever be “clear and convincing” when each and every option above and yet more have been explored and rejected.

The decision you make regarding Ruskin Fields will affect the soul and fabric of this city for generations, for if you accept that high density development on a greenfield site in a Conservation Area next to large, and becoming larger, deprived housing estates with almost no private green space, in the area of the city with the least, then any developer, in any ward, has only to prove his scheme isn't any worse than as Ruskin's, and field by field, park by park each and every last patch of greenery will be built on.

Is that what you intend? The question will be irrelevant, as by creating a precedent, the Council will have no longer be able to refuse.

The SHLAA report shows that including Barton, and even without windfalls or scores of DPD sites under assessment, the city is on track to deliver its boom based housing target of 8000 houses.

I am not denying the very real housing need in this city, but we need to clearly understand it and lets find solutions that give the best possible outcome for people's lives.

Ruskin will fly an eco-friendly faux flag of convenience, stating lack of car parking provision - sorry, no - it simply means valuable space is used for private profit and the infrastructure is dumped on the public domain.

It will claim to open up space - sorry, no - you don't gain green space by concreting over it, and the large “Trespassers Keep Out” signs placed 100s of metres from its nearest building on stated security grounds indicate that even the tokenistic replacement will be of the most limited and highly controlled nature.

Ruskin fields represent a last tiny, accessible fragment of English countryside, that has a long history of public access, do not deprive the deprived of this – let their voice be heard.

When this Council declared the Conservation Area, a promise was made by you, to us, to keep this for the enjoyment of future generations – you should not break that trust just because it is now tougher to keep.

I know that many of you will share at least part of my concerns.

Last but not least, I want to thank the Council – I think has shown it has the ability to listen to the voices of many in the community, recognising their concerns, and having the courage to say “no” to Ruskin when the facts so clearly weigh against the proposal.

Thank for you time

Mark Pitt
19/12/2011

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FAO Matthew Metcalfe, Democratic Services
Oxford City Council - Meeting of Full Council 19th December 2011
Written submission re Agenda Item no. 22 Item 5.1
Transforming the A40 ring-road

We must draw your attention to the most serious flaws in the above proposal and we object most strenuously to this highly polluting expensive and impractical plan.

At the moment the hedges which border the northern section of the A40 on both sides go some way to protect all the residents of Barton, Northway and Headington from noise, fumes and light pollution. The A40 is not a "visual barrier", (as reported in the *Oxford Times* front page 15th December 2011), because the trees and hedges in the central reservation actually hide the road and, also, go some way to reduce the noise and fumes and headlights.

We strongly object to a plan to create this "boulevard" by removing the hedges and the central barrier of trees. This will take away the green buffer which currently provides the only protection that these three communities have against the noise fumes and light pollution from the A40.

A major highway is just that. It cannot become a street, *unless it is closed to all through traffic*. No amount of "landscaping" can alter the fact that this is a major arterial road connecting to other towns and cities across Britain. An arterial road is by definition incompatible with a "street", however artificially engineered, unless you take away most of the cars.

To draw a comparison with Sunderland Avenue is a false one.

The houses in Sunderland Avenue are set back from the road with gardens at the front. They were built in the '50s and '60s at a time when traffic and pollution were negligible compared to now. Such ribbon development is unthinkable today. Houses are no longer built to "front" a major road. On the contrary they are usually shielded by trees and fences. You only have to look at new developments in Bicester and Abingdon to see this. To **deliberately** build houses fronting the A40 and so exposing their occupants to the pollution of a major arterial road is an impractical town planners' fantasy. It provides an appalling, unhealthy, low grade environment for those who live in them.

Recently huge sums have been successfully spent on vastly improving the Green Road roundabout so that traffic can get past it more swiftly. Traffic from London to the West heads down a steep stretch of the A40, and the steepness encourages speed. The whole point of the roundabout improvement was to help traffic get quickly to its destination. Under the proposed A40 "transformation" this improvement would be reversed. The same traffic, speeded up at the roundabout would then have to crawl west along the A40, just so that some mythical people can drink coffee at the side of a highly polluting road! The residents of Barton, Headington and Northway are far more likely to get incessant noise and even more fumes from a slow-moving, crawling "boulevard" than from a road that allows cars free passage as at present and which at least has the protection of the existing green buffers.

Peter Shaw, 8 Stoke Place, Headington, Oxford OX3 9BX on behalf of Stoke Place Residents' Association

Oxford City Council - Meeting of Full Council 19th December 2011
Written submission re Agenda Item no. 22
Policy BA7 Pedestrian and cycle links

This policy proposes to “reconnect Stoke Place bridleway with the existing footpath running north-south across the development site.”

We must point out that “re-connection” involves crossing 4 lanes of traffic just at a point where the two lanes of East-West traffic comes at its fastest downhill from the newly improved Green Road roundabout.. The undue noise from cars which would to slow suddenly at this point will be far in excess of anything heard at present from the A40 by residents of Headington Barton and Northway.

Stoke Place is a narrow rural footpath The recent Conservation Area Appraisal adopted by Oxford City Council in July 2011 says “Stoke Place is continued within this area as an attractive public bridleway running northwards from the Dunstan Road Character Area lined by trees that help green it. The path also benefits from greenery of the verge, which includes carpets of flowers of wild garlic, as well as bluebells in late spring. The rural character of the path was highlighted in 46% of the total number of responses to public consultation on the draft appraisal which **highlighted the rural quality of the bridleway as a key feature of the conservation area.**” It will be clear from this extract that any “upgrading” of this path to create a cycle track **will destroy the very features which the conservation area appraisal regards as important.**

In addition, to the south of the footpath, Stoke Place is lined by stone walls. These ancient walls form part of the Conservation area and make Stoke Place very narrow and are an intrinsic part of its character in the conservation area. It is a car’s width for about 20 metres of its length. It is physically impossible to make Stoke Place “cycle and pedestrian friendly” **because there is a narrow 20metre long section has no pavement and no room for one.**

When a vehicle, a car or a refuse collection vehicle, goes up or down Stoke Place (which is a cul de sac) **cyclists and pedestrians have to take refuge in the gateway of a house, or retrace their footsteps to the bottom of the road, or run to get out of the way.** There is no refuge in the narrow section. When Ruskin College commissions its new car park at the north end of Stoke Place and in addition uses Stoke Place again for all its service and refuse collection vehicles, there will be a total of about 50 vehicle movements a day (25 return journeys) at a conservative estimate. At busy times Stoke Place can be a dangerous road along which to walk. and cyclist have to frequently give way and dismount.. There is no room for a vehicle and a pedestrian, nor for a vehicle and a cyclist at the same time. Stoke Place cannot therefore be pedestrian and cycle friendly but is a hazardous pedestrian and cycle route.

*Peter Shaw, 8 Stoke Place, Headington, Oxford OX3 9BX on behalf of **Stoke Place Residents’ Association***

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Written submission opposing the ‘boulevard’ idea set out in Item 22 on the agenda for Full Council 19/12/2011.

We would like to register our strong objection to the proposal to “transform the A40” near Headington, Barton, and Northway, into something the planning policy team calls a “a street running through the city”, on the grounds that this is completely unrealistic and is a potential disaster in the making.

Section 5 in the Draft Submission for the BAAP contains a series of ideas based on planning theory rather than on the reality of the situation north of Old Headington.

The A40 is a main road carrying heavy traffic round Oxford as quickly as possible, and as such it is a masterpiece of town planning which current proposals would completely destroy.

Far from being what the document describes as “a noisy and visually dominating physical barrier that separates Barton and its surroundings from the rest of the city” it is in fact almost completely invisible from Headington, Northway, Barton, and the land to the west of Barton.

Thanks to sensitive engineering which took advantage of the natural dip in the land, and the retaining of belts of green along the perimeters, backed up by planting of shrubs and trees, this road has as little impact as could reasonably be asked of a four-lane bypass.

There are currently three green buffers which defend Northway, Barton and Old Headington from the worst of the traffic and pollution: mature trees and shrubs each side, and a thick green central reservation in the middle, which keep all these areas reasonably free from noise and pollution. The development west of Barton will benefit from this as well. Doing away with all this to create a ‘boulevard’ so that residents on either side of four lanes of traffic feel that they all form part of the same community is wishful thinking.

Furthermore, the green fringes lining the northern bypass provide a cushion between the Old Headington conservation area and the A40; and we need to bear in mind that these and all the fields and green spaces within the ring-road round Oxford are vital not just as a natural local amenity but as providing the wider landscape setting of Oxford; they must be preserved at all costs, and not sacrificed to an unproven theory of “integration”.

The Draft Submission suggests that “New residential frontages will be built on the northern side of the ring-road” and says “To ensure that there is no sense of separation between the new neighbourhood and the rest of Oxford, new homes will be built fronting on to the ring-road”.

We know for a fact that residents either side of Sunderland Avenue facing the noise, pollution, and traffic which is part of their daily existence don’t feel this way, and until there is real evidence to underpin the proposals in this document for the future of the A40 we urge Councillors to demand a complete re-think of this idea.

Clive and Veronica Hurst

9 Stoke Place, Headington, OX3 9BX

STATEMENT FROM EDWARD CHIPPERFIELD, ON BEHALF OF THE TRIANGLE ASSOCIATION OF EAST OXFORD

I would like to state the support of residents in The Triangle group of East Oxford for the proposed new legislation. We are a group of Residents Associations between The Plain and Magdalen Road who are directly affected by the proposals.

The provision of affordable housing, balanced communities and a better quality of life for all is a win-win for everyone. Long-term residents agree with the council that students play an important role in East Oxford, and we have been extremely concerned about the quality of life they have to endure at present.

By providing a balanced mix of residents, East Oxford will become a more attractive place to live for workers, students and businesses. Diversity is key to this. Giving students the housing they deserve in suitable locations, provided by landlords who care deeply about standards and who are able to run their businesses successfully, is an achievable goal that this proposal will reach.

By freeing up homes for families and workers, the economy of East Oxford will not slide into the doldrums of a situation where consumers only use local businesses and facilities during term-time. Too many residents have seen local businesses fold due to 'quiet' periods in vacation time; houses falling into disrepair as they stand empty for months; streets that are unattractive for families because of their dilapidated state.

More workers and families mean a better place for students to come and live, shop and socialise. Students choose to live off-campus because they want to come to a community that is alive and thriving, and restricting the growth of HMOs and the threat of monoculture in East Oxford makes it a better place for them, as well as a more pleasant place for permanent residents.

The plan to locate future student developments along sensible routes is also applauded by our residents. Students suffer from the friction that unplanned HMO growth creates in the community. A street that has more than the proposed 20% of HMOs is no longer a quiet residential street, as our members know. Students cannot be blamed for feeling a sense of ownership over a road where they have been allowed to live in great numbers, but likewise, it is only natural that residents may feel a sense of being displaced, and leave in greater numbers. The inevitable conflicts that have arisen between a small but disruptive minority of students and their neighbours can only be resolved by this proposal.

A sensible mix of HMOs, family housing and purpose-built student accommodation will increase the quality of student life and guarantee that students feel closer ties to the community that they live in. It will maintain East Oxford's reputation as a vibrant, diverse and friendly place to live for all.

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The Oxford City Committee of the CPRE is concerned that the Sites and Housing DPD is being prepared before a Green Infrastructure Strategy and a Development Management DPD have been published. These are key documents that should be in place before sites are allocated, so that both the City Council and the general public have a holistic view of the impact that any development would have on the city as a whole and can make informed decisions as a result.

The pitfalls of such a piecemeal approach to planning are illustrated by the Sites and Housing DPD, which fails to demonstrate how the City Council intends to provide a balanced green space provision for the anticipated population growth within the city boundaries.

In terms of the quantity of accessible green space, the city currently falls short of the Council's own green space standard set out in the Core Strategy. The green space standard is set at 5.75 hectares per 1000 population, yet based on the 2010 population estimate the provision of accessible green space is currently only 5 hectares per 1000 population. If one accepts the Office for National Statistics' population projection of 159,100 for 2026, the provision of green space will be further reduced to 4.8 hectares per 1000 population, and an additional 144 hectares of green space will be needed in order to meet the city green space standard. This deficit will clearly be exacerbated by the City Council's intention to develop a number of green spaces, despite local sentiment expressed in the two rounds of consultation that they should be retained because they provide much needed recreation space, sports facilities, food-growing areas or access to nature.

The Sites and Housing DPD represents a missed opportunity to redress this balance and to create green spaces in parts of the city, such as Littlemore and Blackbird Leys, which suffer from chronic under-provision.

Green spaces are fundamental to social inclusion, community cohesion and well-being, and they provide the essential green infrastructure that enables us to deal with floods, and mitigate or adapt to climate change. PPS1 states that in selecting land for development, 'planning authorities should take into account the contribution to be made from existing and new opportunities for open and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity'. The Sites and Housing DPD fails to demonstrate that any such consideration has been made.

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East Minchery Farm

Comments on Site and Housing Development Plan Document – Proposed Submission Draft

The site has been the hub of positive community action for the past three years. It has brought neighbours together through a huge range of activities including community picnics, berry treasure hunts, clearing days for allotment patches, archaeological digs, communal orchard tree planting, and poetry days for children. The site, because its size, its ability to accommodate large groups of people without having a disturbing impact on any neighbouring properties, has empowered a long struggling community and given them the will to get involved in positive change in their area. As the document rightfully recognises the site is currently being used for growing vegetables by local residents and is regularly used for leisure activities, therefore it is misleading to say the site is disused.

Within the document the council say they are pleased to have received responses from the South east of the City which is normally difficult to engage, and that strong representations have been received against East Minchery Farm development. However, it seems as though our oppositions and the reasons for which have not been taken into consideration, rather, we have been ignored. We want to know; why are we not being heard? Some sites have been taken out in response to opposition! There is strong opposition against any development on East Minchery Farm from the Blackbird Leys, Northfield Brook and Littlemore Community Wards. This is a bad example of local democracy. We would be more reluctant to come forward with comments in the future for the fact you have not listened.

The document states that the council are keen to work with the local community to strike a balance between housing and safe public open space, to propose to retain only 25% of the site as a public open space is not a balanced split between housing and open spaces, particularly as the green space study shows there is 80% deficit of open green spaces. Given the added pressure the high density of people will put on the area, a more appropriate proposal would be for a reverse split of housing/ open space allocation: 25% of the land used for housing 75% reserved as a secure public open space

The description of the biodiversity of the site does not do the site justice. This site is an oasis of biodiversity in an area where highly homogenous formal landscaping has diminished so much of what nature had to offer freely. Local residents have witnessed a number of badgers and monk jacks on the site and slow worms and common lizards have been a regular point of fascination to the local children. For them to be relocated to another site would deprive local children from another great opportunity to have a better understanding of nature and their natural environment.

It is very encouraging to see the council acknowledge that access onto the site should be improved, this is something the local community has been constantly campaigning for 3 three years. It is, however, disheartening that they will only acknowledge the access issues now that there is a profit at stake and have avoided addressing the issue for so long despite there being the wellbeing of children and disabled people at stake, as the same access routes are the main public rights of way to Oxford Academy for the children living on Falcon Close.

What the Housing Development Plan document seems to have ignored/overlooked

1) Local Authorities Duties to Provide Allotments

Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 states that allotment authorities must provide a sufficient number of allotments and let them to persons resident in the area. If there are a number of people in the local area who are keen to have an allotment, then they could make representations to the parish council under section 23(2) of the 1908 Act. The council has a duty to consider representations from 6 or more registered parliamentary electors in the parish.

The allotments federation and Falcon Close Residents Association have a waiting list for allotment land. Why is it that representations made to the council have been ignored?

2) The Government has plans to introduce a new Community Right to Reclaim Land. This will enable communities to challenge, with the Government's help, whether hundreds of public bodies are making best use of their land and property. Used on its own, or in conjunction with other Community Rights (for example, to Buy), this will mean that where land that is important locally is not being made best use of, communities will have a much better chance of getting hold of that land or property. In such cases communities will then be able to use this land, depending on its circumstances, for a variety of purposes, including redeveloping it for use as a community garden, park or as space for food growing and other community activities.

Your document does not reveal why your plans for development for that site are paramount to the plans developed by the local community. In fact your document does not show that there *is* another side. You are aware Falcon Close Residents Association have a business plan to develop the land for community use.

3) New Neighbourhood Planning provisions in the Localism Bill will provide communities with a means to boost the amount of space for food growing with powers to protect existing allotments and identify new plots. A referendum at the end of the process ensures communities have the final say on whether a neighbourhood development plan or development order comes into force in their area.

People in Communities have the final say, not Oxford City Council.

In light of this we will appeal to the secretary of state against any application for more than 25% of the site to be developed for housing.

Falcon Close Residents Association