

# COUNCIL

Monday 2 February 2015

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Abbasi (Lord Mayor), Humberstone (Sheriff), Simmons (Deputy Lord Mayor), Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Benjamin, Brown, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Darke, Fooks, Fry, Gant, Goddard, Gotch, Haines, Hayes, Henwood, Hollick, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, Munkonge, Paule, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Sanders, Seamons, Sinclair, Smith, Tanner, Tarver, Taylor, Thomas, Turner, Upton, Van Nooijen, Wade, Wilkinson and Wolff.

## **75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors Brandt, Malik and Simm submitted apologies.

## **76. MINUTES**

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 1 December 2014 as a true and correct record subject to correcting resolution 8 of Minute 66 to read “that a mechanism be put in place for dealing with special circumstances in relation to Dependent Carers’ Allowances, namely that it be delegated to the Head of Law and Governance and the Committee and Members’ Services Manager” as set out in the report and agreed by Council.

## **77. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations made.

## **78. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES**

There were no appointments.

## **79. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Lord Mayor announced that since the last meeting the following had taken place:

- Chinese economic development officers had visited to investigate local joint ventures;
- the Broad Street Christmas market;
- the Christmas fun run in Christ Church Meadow;
- the Lord Mayor’s Christmas reception;
- the Lord Mayor’s Christmas carol concert which raised £2,479.15 for the Mayor’s charities;
- Princess Anne’s visit to the Oxford Farming Conference;
- The leaving reception for Oxford Brookes Vice Chancellor Janet Beer.

He reminded councillors that the Lord Mayor’s charity dinner would be held on 27 March 2015.

The Leader of the Council announced:

- Nominations for the civic office holders for the 2015/16 municipal year would be:
  - Lord Mayor – Councillor Humberstone
  - Deputy Lord Mayor – Councillor Cook
  - Sheriff – Councillor Malik.
- The Chief Constable's presentation to councillors would be on 13 April before the Council meeting.

## **80. PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING**

There were no addresses or questions.

## **81. AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS IN LIGHT OF THE AMENDED NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Council had before it a report recommending how affordable housing contributions will be sought in the light of the amended national Planning Practice Guidance.

Councillor Price moved and Councillor Turner seconded the report.

Council agreed to:

1. endorse the recommended approach set out in the report and Appendix 4; and
2. agree that it is not revoking or modifying Policies HP3 and HP4, that they retain the status of up-to-date adopted development plan policies under s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 but the Council is acknowledging the likely effect of the amended national Planning Practice Guidance.

## **82. STREET TRADING POLICY**

Councillor Clarkson, Chair of the General Licensing Committee, recommended deferring consideration of this item to the next meeting and Council concurred. The policy was not discussed at this meeting.

## **83. CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES**

Council had before it the minutes of the City Executive Board meetings of 10 December 2014, 17 December 2014 and 23 December 2014.

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 were not yet available and so would be taken at the next ordinary meeting.

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2014**

On Minute 95, Councillor Fooks asked if the street cleaning standards and information on council's powers to remove graffiti could be circulated to all members. Councillor Tanner gave assurances this would be done.

On Minute 97, Councillor Fooks asked about the results of the budget consultation. Councillor Turner answered that this ran from before Christmas to the end of January and a summary of responses would be included in the budget report

Councillor Simmons thanked the City Executive Board for respecting the scrutiny process when deciding the future of Temple Cowley Pools and Councillor Price thanked the scrutiny committee on their consideration of this issue.

### **84. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

Questions were asked of the Board members and Leader and responses given.

#### **Board member for Educational Attainment and Youth Ambition, Councillor Kennedy**

##### **1. From Councillor Gant**

Following the presentation of the report by the KRM educational organisation to CEB, will the board member acknowledge that the scheme has failed to deliver councils own published target for improvements at KS2? While we wholeheartedly support councils desire to address a significant problem, will he acknowledge that council should have been more ready to consider combining with the similar, more successful, scheme run by the county? Will he support us in calling for the KRM project not to be continued, and for underspent funds, and any further available funds, to be made available for schemes which genuinely address the real educational needs in the city?

##### **Written response**

I am not sure where Cllr Gant is getting his information from but the comprehensive report presented by Dr Jonathan Solity to the Scrutiny Committee set out very impressive gains in educational attainment in the schools which chose to take up this programme funded by the City Council.

Of course KRM is just part of the overall programme designed by and agreed with the schools to meet the ambitious targets for 2016. As it is only January 2015 we do not know whether we shall meet them or not. However, progress is strong as we can see from the recent results for schools across Oxfordshire. The schools which chose to follow the overall educational attainment programme are showing twice as much progress as other schools in Oxfordshire at age 7 and at age 11 the progress is four times as much. This represents substantial progress towards the 2016 targets, rather than failure.

It was always intended that, as soon as possible, that schools would become self-sufficient in the approaches and techniques advocated in the KRM approach. As such there was no long term commitment to funding the KRM programme.

We are awaiting the results of an evaluation currently being carried out by Professor Deborah McGregor of Oxford Brookes University. She is currently visiting all the target schools. As part of this process she is asking head teachers what support they would find most helpful to assist them in their continuing journey of raising achievement. We are waiting for her report in early March before deciding how to commit the funding for the next two years.

### **Supplementary question**

This programme won't achieve results if schools do not take part. Would the Board Member agree that without the take up it cannot achieve its stated objectives?

### **Response**

This programme is available only to Oxford City schools. Schools using the programme have greater improvements in achievement at ages 7 and 11 than those across the county as a whole. This shows that attainment can be improved in the city and the programme should be supported.

### **Board member for Leisure Contract and Community Partnership Grants, Councillor Rowley**

#### **2. From Councillor Thomas**

I'm sure the board member is aware of the vital work carried out across Oxfordshire by Oxford's Community Action Groups (CAG) and the impending cut to its support from the County Council. Would they consider contributing to the joint commissioning of CAG in the future along with other Oxfordshire councils?

### **Written response**

CAG Oxfordshire is a network of over 50 local community action groups (CAGs). We recognise the useful work that the Community Action Groups do in bringing communities together to take local action, particularly in the city around low carbon and recycling. Each CAG is unique, but all are run by local volunteers who organise events and initiatives to raise awareness and take action on climate change issues. They help their local communities to live a more sustainable and less resource-dependent life by promoting:

- waste reduction and the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle)
- carbon reduction
- sustainable transport
- food, energy and water issues

The county fund £96,000 which they are cutting over three years.

The County Council is facing a major budget shortfall this year and are forced to make cuts, but the saving achieved by reducing the financial support to the CAGs is very small in relation to the £20 million target, and the damage done to the County network of community action groups is disproportionate to the benefit to the County budget. I have personally lobbied the County to withdraw this proposed cut.

While the City Council has been able to maintain and in some cases increase its funding for the voluntary and community sector, we cannot reasonably be expected to pick up the bill for every County Council cut. We regret the reductions in funding proposed by the County Council but note that this is being

phased out over a three year period. We therefore propose to engage with the CAG network and those groups operating in the city to see if a new sustainable model can be found preferably without the City having to step in once again to fund another County Council cut.

### **Supplementary question**

The question relates to a specific cut. As £10 can be raised by community groups as a result of each pound spent supporting the CAG, £10,000 and encouraging other authorities to contribute could result in £500,000 for community work across the county. Would the Board Member support this?

### **Response**

We will look sympathetically at any definite proposal. What this government terms 'big society' cannot work without sufficient support. This council is not going to follow the county council's lead in making cuts but while we will do what we can we cannot guarantee we will fund any project.

### **3. From Councillor Hollick**

Can the board member justify why Temple Cowley Pool was closed early on the 23rd December with no warning to centre users, disrupting swimming for pool users including the evening women-only session?

### **Written response**

The pool was due to close that evening for the Christmas break and there had been a series of unplanned fire alarms during the day which caused serious disruption to the users of the pool and to the staff. In the situation where the Leys Pool had already opened and the sale of the land to Catalyst Housing Association was being concluded, it was decided to close the pool earlier. I am sorry if this caused inconvenience for a small number of people who would have wished to use the pool before the normal closing time of 10pm.

The new pool opening is the final stage in the delivering the 2009 Leisure Strategy that has seen usage in the centres increase by 40%, with the greatest increases in target groups and annual costs reducing from c£2 million to a zero cost service in 2016/17. The feedback from the new pool has been excellent and at the opening weekend the centre received 12,000 visits.

Among many other improvements, the replacement of the pool has enabled us to schedule three rather than two women-only sessions a week, in different parts of Oxford: at the Leys, Barton and Ferry. We are committed to building on these successes and making the leisure service as accessible as possible for all Oxford's communities.

### **Supplementary question**

It was hard to believe that the decision to shut the pool to the public was not made in advance of the formal decision after the scrutiny committee meeting. Did the timing of the closure create unnecessary animosity?

### **Response**

The surprise is that the pool was running for so long. I congratulate staff on having closed and secured the pool without any undue inconvenience and

without mishap. I don't regret closing the pool promptly having taken the final decision to do so, as it was costing the city's taxpayers to keep it open.

## **Board member for Housing and Estate Regeneration, Councillor Seamons**

### **4. From Councillor Fooks**

It is Council policy that all hard surfaces on any development should be permeable. Why is it then that the works done last year to replace paving stones on HRA land with tarmac was allowed? It is most definitely not permeable and there is a lot of it. When will the Housing department be asked to replace the tarmac with permeable paving of some kind to comply with the Council's own policy?

#### **Written response**

This policy applies to new development. The work referred to is for planned maintenance of paved areas. The original paving slabs are pointed in and as such do not offer a permeable surface. In addition they can become a trip hazard, creating maintenance issues that the Council could have liability for around their upkeep.

Existing paving slabs in such areas have been replaced with tarmac which is low maintenance, easy to repair and has no further drainage issues than the surface it has replaced. In general, pathways to blocks are well served by adequate water run-offs.

The larger new engineering works, such as the car parking schemes currently being undertaken on the city's estates, have fully permeable, Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) compliant surfaces installed.

#### **Supplementary question**

Would you agree that all paving done by the council should be permeable and that it is regrettable tenants were not consulted?

#### **Response**

I will look into the issue and see if this is feasible.

### **5. From Councillor Hollick**

Can the board member update council on any progress they have made, since council passed the relevant motion in November 2013, in negotiating for locally set right to buy discounts in order to protect our stock of council housing being sold off?

Are they aware of recent efforts by Brighton and Hove council to negotiate for an end to the right to buy in favour of alternative incentives that would protect council stock - and will they support these negotiations now there is more widespread support for our initiative?

#### **Written response**

The contents of the motion of 25 November 2013 were sent in the form of a letter to the Minister of Housing on behalf of the council in the name of the chief executive, without response. Unfortunately we have to comply with national policy on this issue which does not include the possibility of local exemptions. We will follow Brighton and Hove's attempts with interest but see no prospect for

success under the present coalition government. I would also draw colleagues attention to recent announcements from the conservative party that if they were to be elected they would wish to introduce new measures to further stimulate the right to buy including the extension to Housing Association properties. As a Council we will also look at other ownership models for our new housing provision that will give greater protection to rent levels and from loss of stock to right to buy. We intend to review our options following the general election and as Government policy then emerges.

### **Supplementary question**

How are we going to lobby a future government for powers to protect council stock?

### **Response**

We will consider this after the general election.

### **Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Turner**

#### **6. From Councillor Fooks**

At Council on 1 December, you replied to my question on the Covered Market that 'the draft Action plan and Programme would be available within the next month'. Can you tell Council where they can find this document?

### **Written response**

A draft document has been drawn up and will be progressed further with a submission for CEB.

### **Supplementary question**

Could the Board member explain the reason for the delay?

### **Response**

Traders have been given opportunity to see the action plan in advance of it being made public. Many improvements have already taken place or are planned and traders are more optimistic about the effect these have on the market.

### **Leader of the Council, Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning, Councillor Price**

#### **7. From Councillor Simmons**

In Autumn 2014, the City Council abandoned its planning requirement for developers to comply with its Natural Resources Impact Analysis SPD in favour of policy HP11 which weakens the requirement to provide 20% of energy from renewable sources. Now, developers now longer MUST provide any on-site renewable energy. Given this:

- Will the Councillor agree that this is a retrograde step?
- Will he explain how this helps the Council deliver on its climate change aspirations?
- Since HP11 replaced the NRIA how many qualifying developments have complied with it as opposed to the tougher criteria of NRIA?
- Will the Councillor commit to reinstating the tougher RE targets set out in the NRIA which the Council first adopted in 2006?

### **Written response**

I do not agree that Policy HP11 is a retrograde step; our policy has not been weakened but rather has extended the requirement to provide 20% minimum on-site renewable energy.

Policy HP11 was introduced when the Sites and Housing Plan was adopted in February 2013. It continues to implement the 20% on-site renewable energy policy and requires the 20% to account for total energy (i.e. regulated and unregulated). Policy HP11 also introduced a requirement for sites of less than ten dwellings to provide an element of on-site renewable energy and produce an Energy Statement to document how renewable technologies and sustainability measures have been incorporated into small developments – the NRIA did not include this.

The NRIA Policy still applies for qualifying non-residential developments.

In due course policy HP 11 and the NRIA Policy will be reviewed as part of a wider review of Local Plan Policies. Although any new approach in relation to climate change aspirations will need to be in accord with the National Planning Policy Framework prevailing at the time.

The number of qualifying developments that have been assessed under Policy HP11 is not data that is readily available at this time, but will be provided later.

### **Supplementary question**

The NRIA adopted in 2006 required at least 20% of energy needs to be from well-defined renewable sources, but while low-carbon sources are worthy these are not interchangeable. What is the rationale for the change?

### **Response**

I understand the point but the NPPF has clear statements that we should be consistent with the zero-carbon buildings policy, and this is a positive strategy to promote low carbon and/or renewables and maintains our strategy for on-site renewable energy. We need to have robust policies which both comply with government policy and reflect our own aspirations.

### **8. From Councillor Gant**

At its meeting in December, Council voted unanimously for the city to impose conditions concerning cycle safety on lorries used by its own contractors, and to urge the county council to use its own powers to do the same for all other lorries within the city boundaries. Will the board member inform council on what progress has been made, and responses received from the county?

### **Written response**

The available information is being collated and will be reported in writing to members.

### **Supplementary question**

When will this be available?

### **Response**

Officers are currently working on this and I hope to have a response soon.

## **9. From Councillor Wade**

As a result of the confusion over the merging of Evergreen 3 and East West Rail, it has become unclear whether the residents of Stone Meadow and Cox's Ground on the Waterways Estate are still covered by amelioration plans with respect to noise and vibration. Will the City Council press Network Rail to recognise the impact of the increased rail traffic on Waterways and Waterside and put in mitigation measures to protect the residents?

### **Written response**

The City Council's powers in relation to railway development programmes are limited. The rail operators enjoy comprehensive permitted development rights deriving from successive pieces of legislation since the 1840s. Council officers have been liaising closely with Network Rail and Chiltern Railways about the schemes that are currently under way covering the whole stretch of line from Redbridge to Water Eaton. They have consistently sought to emphasise the need to take full account of the visual and aural impact of the works that they are undertaking on local residents, and the various residents groups have been liaising very effectively with the rail operators. The Council has yet to come to a decision on the discharge of Condition 19 of the Inspector's report relating to the Wolvercote section of the work, and will continue to do everything that is within its power to secure appropriate mitigation measures against noise, vibration and visual intrusion.

### **Supplementary question**

Why did the council not identify planning considerations for housing sites near the railway and can we provide guidelines for developments near the railway?

### **Response**

I will look at whether this is now feasible.

## **10. From Councillor Gant**

Will the leader join us in unequivocally condemning the fact that a legal, commercial decision by a trader has been overturned by threats of intimidation and violence? (this refers to the decision by the Wendy News proprietors to cancel their order for 500 copies of Charlie hebdo because of intimidation. it was in the Oxford Mail and at [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-30896558](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-30896558) )

### **Written response**

Intimidation and threats of violence against shopkeepers should have no place in a civilised society.

## **11. From Councillor Wade**

Would the board member investigate the adoption of a £1 a night 'bed tax' for hotel stays in Oxford? This is used in Paris, Berlin and Barcelona, and the Labour-controlled Camden council is seeking to join with other London councils for the right to impose a tourist levy of £1 per bed per night. Camden estimates it could raise 5 million p.a. from the levy which would be spent on extra street cleaning in popular tourist areas. Monies raised in Oxford could be 'reinvested in marketing and urban realm improvements' (from report of the London Finance Commission, set up by the Mayor of London in 2012).

### **Written response**

The power for local authorities to raise income from sources such as overnight stays in hotels and guest houses has been regularly advocated by the Local Government Association. Fiscal devolution of this type must figure in whatever policies are proposed by the incoming government in May 2015.

### **Supplementary question**

What needs to be done to make this possible? It could be implemented now if the council were willing to push this forward as a matter of urgency.

### **Response**

There is no commitment from central government to increase fiscal devolution and there will have to be some form of this to allow us to raise this levy. We would support this as a policy but are not able to implement it.

### **12. From Councillor Simmons**

Will the Leader write to Newsquest on behalf of the Council expressing concern at the proposed reduction in staff numbers at their Oxford office and proposal to further centralise subbing activities to Newport, Wales?

### **Written response**

I have already done so, in response to a request from the NUJ Branch.

### **13. From Councillor Thomas**

Will the leader of the council give his full support to working with stakeholders to re-instate this year's lantern parade?

### **Written response**

Planning for the Christmas Light Festival 2015 is at a very early stage, and the scope for re-introducing a Lantern Parade is on the agenda. The issues of route, crowd controls and traffic disruption will be under review to see if a workable solution that will meet Safety Advisory Group requirements can be devised.

### **14. From Councillor Thomas**

Does the leader of the council share my concerns that the alterations in voter registration have led to the loss of thousands of registered voters in the city, mainly within the colleges, and with only a matter of weeks until the general election what will he be doing to increase registration?

### **Written response**

The reduction in the size of the electoral register in the wake of the move to individual electoral registration is clearly a matter of grave concern to the Council and to everyone with an interest in local democracy. The Council ran a major advertising and information campaign over the summer and early autumn months, including attendance at the Freshers Fairs at both universities and intensive work with university and college administrators. That work has continued and I have had meetings with key SU and University representatives, including the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford and the Academic Registrar at Oxford Brookes University. Council Electoral registration staff held a

further meeting on 28 January with all these groups and a major drive is under way to ensure that as many students are registered as possible.

### **Supplementary**

We would have to register 100 students a day to add all those we think are unregistered. Are we doing everything we can to encourage registration?

### **Response**

9000 students city-wide need to register before the election or they will lose their democratic right to vote unless they have registered at their home address. We will be putting all possible resources into encouraging registration.

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

Nigel Gibson representing Save Temple Cowley Pools - A successful social enterprise in East Oxford, addressed Council. The text of his address is attached to the minutes.

Councillor Rowley responded briefly to Mr Gibson.

## **86. OUTSIDE ORGANISATION/COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS AND QUESTIONS**

Councillor Sinclair moved the report.

Councillors commented on the negative impact of potential cuts to domestic violence services, voluntary services generally, and to CCTV across the city; and welcomed multi-agency work. In response to comments, Councillor Sinclair undertook to review how rough sleeping was described.

Council noted the report on the work of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

## **87. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE BRIEFING**

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair.

Councillor Simmons moved the report. The executive board had considered several reports from the committee and adopted their recommendations. He outlined the work of the two standing panels and three review panels, in particular the Finance Panel's work on the budget and their forthcoming discussion on European funding opportunities, and thanked the Chairs of the panels.

Council noted the report without comment.

## **88. MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Council had before it five motions on notice and amendments submitted in accordance with Council procedure rule 11.16, and reached decisions as set out below.

## **(1) Devolution for Councils**

Councillor Fooks proposed her submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Gant:

*Council notes:*

- a) The strong and enthusiastic participation shown by the people of Scotland in a remarkable democratic process leading to the Referendum on 18 September;*
- b) The resulting increased discussion on the devolution of powers from central government in Westminster and Whitehall.*

*Council believes:*

- I. That power should be devolved to the people in all parts of the United Kingdom;*
- II. That England is currently ruled by an over-centralised state that fails to reflect localities and regions;*
- III. That concentrating more power to English MPs in Westminster is not the answer for English devolution and that passing power down to local areas of England is essential.*

*Council therefore calls for the leaders of the three political groups on Oxford City Council to ask Oxford's MPs to join them in lobbying Government to plan for urgent major devolution of power, including tax raising and spending, from central government to the regions, counties, boroughs & districts and cities of England.*

*and that such lobbying should emphasise:*

- that the devolution of powers and finance to English councils be carried out in ways that enhance and strengthen local democratic bodies. This must include agreement that it shall be for local people and communities to decide their form of democratic leadership without having a specific model imposed (for example directly elected Mayors) in return for more powers;*
- a recognition that English devolution must include both large cities and county areas, as the many councils not within city regions must also gain greater powers and finance in order to build successful and prosperous futures.*

*Council further asks that this devolution should include consideration of the role that could be played by local elected bodies such as area committees or parish councils within the current district structure.*

Councillor Turner proposed an amendment, submitted in advance of the meeting, seconded by Councillor van Nooijen:

*Amend III to add before "local areas of England" the words "**city regions and local areas of England**".*

*Delete (in the paragraph beginning "Council therefore calls...") the words "tax raising and spending", and instead add at the end of the paragraph: "Council believes local government needs more fiscal autonomy – for instance, the ability to levy modest taxes on tourism – but that there should not be an erosion of national solidarity, such that areas with lower tax bases are placed in an even worse economic situation, on the back of the disproportionate cuts they have suffered under the Coalition government.*

*Delete the final paragraph and amend to read: "Council further believes that democratic transparency would be enhanced by introducing single-tier local*

*government to Oxfordshire based upon several district councils becoming unitary, and that such councils should make the greatest possible effort to involve all sections of their communities in decision-making.”*

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amendment was declared carried.

On being put to the vote, the motion as amended was declared carried.

**Council agreed to adopt the motion as set out below:**

*Council notes:*

- a) The strong and enthusiastic participation shown by the people of Scotland in a remarkable democratic process leading to the Referendum on 18 September;*
- b) The resulting increased discussion on the devolution of powers from central government in Westminster and Whitehall.*

*Council believes:*

- I. That power should be devolved to the people in all parts of the United Kingdom;*
- II. That England is currently ruled by an over-centralised state that fails to reflect localities and regions;*
- III. That concentrating more power to English MPs in Westminster is not the answer for English devolution and that passing power down to city regions and local areas of England is essential.*

*Council therefore calls for the leaders of the three political groups on Oxford City Council to ask Oxford's MPs to join them in lobbying Government to plan for urgent major devolution of power from central government to the regions, counties, boroughs & districts and cities of England. Council believes local government needs more fiscal autonomy – for instance, the ability to levy modest taxes on tourism – but that there should not be an erosion of national solidarity, such that areas with lower tax bases are placed in an even worse economic situation, on the back of the disproportionate cuts they have suffered under the Coalition government.*

*and that such lobbying should emphasise:*

- that the devolution of powers and finance to English councils be carried out in ways that enhance and strengthen local democratic bodies. This must include agreement that it shall be for local people and communities to decide their form of democratic leadership without having a specific model imposed (for example directly elected Mayors) in return for more powers;*
- a recognition that English devolution must include both large cities and county areas, as the many councils not within city regions must also gain greater powers and finance in order to build successful and prosperous futures.*

*Council further believes that democratic transparency would be enhanced by introducing single-tier local government to Oxfordshire based upon several district councils becoming unitary, and that such councils should make the greatest possible effort to involve all sections of their communities in decision-making.*

## **(2) Reversing NHS privatisation**

Councillor Hollick proposed his submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Thomas:

*Council notes that at the start of this year the first private company to run a hospital walked away from its contract. This followed critical findings from the Care Quality Commission around inadequate standards for safety and patient care.*

*Council believes that this example clearly illustrates the dangers of privatisation in the NHS, and is concerned that uncertainty created by private providers could increase now that the Secretary of State's duty to provide has been abolished by the 2012 Health and Social Care Act.*

*Council welcomes the Private Member's Bill from Clive Efford MP as an attempt to tackle privatisation, but notes this Bill's shortcomings - including the failure to re-establish the Secretary of State's duty to provide the NHS.*

*Council therefore resolves to:*

*(i) endorse the NHS Reinstatement Bill which proposes to:*

- reinstate in England the legal duty of the Secretary of State to provide the NHS*
- abolish competition;*
- abolish the purchaser-provider split;*
- re-establish public bodies and public accountability; and*
- restrict the role of commercial companies.*

*(ii) call on the city's two MPs to support the Bill to be introduced in the next parliament.*

Councillor Taylor proposed an amendment, submitted in advance of the meeting, seconded by Councillor Brown:

*Delete all after "Clive Efford MP" and replace with:*

*Council believes that the last thing that our precious National Health Service needs is another top down reorganisation.*

*Council recognises the tremendous strain on staff in all parts of our health service at the moment in a climate of shortages of nurses and doctors at a time of increasing numbers of patients with more complex needs.*

*Council believes that we must preserve the values of our National Health Service for future generations and that we should listen to those currently working in the health service about the need for integration of health and social care services as well as the importance of public health.*

After debate and on being put to the vote, the amendment was declared carried.

On being put to the vote, the motion as amended was declared carried.

**Council agreed to adopt the motion as set out below:**

*Council notes that at the start of this year the first private company to run a hospital walked away from its contract. This followed critical findings from the Care Quality Commission around inadequate standards for safety and patient care.*

*Council believes that this example clearly illustrates the dangers of privatisation in the NHS, and is concerned that uncertainty created by private providers could increase now that the Secretary of State's duty to provide has been abolished by the 2012 Health and Social Care Act.*

*Council welcomes the Private Member's Bill from Clive Efford MP.*

*Council believes that the last thing that our precious National Health Service needs is another top down reorganisation.*

*Council recognises the tremendous strain on staff in all parts of our health service at the moment in a climate of shortages of nurses and doctors at a time of increasing numbers of patients with more complex needs.*

*Council believes that we must preserve the values of our National Health Service for future generations and that we should listen to those currently working in the health service about the need for integration of health and social care services as well as the importance of public health.*

**(3) Voting Reform**

Council agreed to suspend the relevant procedure rules to permit a five-minute address to be made in support of this motion at this point in the proceedings and to extend the total time to debate motions by the time taken to make the address.

Greg Holyoke addressed the committee. The submitted text of his speech is appended to these minutes.

Councillor Hayes proposed his submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Rowley:

*This Council believes:*

- 1. 16 and 17 year olds are knowledgeable and passionate about the world in which they live and are as capable of engaging in the democratic system as any other citizen;*
- 2. Lowering the voting age to 16, combined with strong citizenship education, empowers young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future;*
- 3. People who can consent to medical treatment, work full-time, pay taxes, get married or enter a civil partnership and join the armed forces should also have the right to vote;*

4. *Individual registration is affecting the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register, with particular repercussions for young, student, BME, disabled, and disadvantaged people living in social and rented housing.*

We call on the Council to:

1. *Support the recent proposals to extend the franchise in all elections to 16 and 17 year olds.*
2. *Ask local MPs and the government to back the policy announced by the Labour Party, in the spirit of their actions in the Scottish Referendum and extend the franchise in all elections to 16 and 17 year olds.*
3. *Continue working with Oxford Schools and Colleges to enhance citizenship education for all young people in Oxford.*
4. *Continue working with community groups, faith organisations, residential associations, and other groups and people to make the electoral register as complete as possible.*

On being put to the vote, **Council agreed to adopt the motion as set out above.**

#### **(4) General Election TV debates**

Councillor Wolff withdrew his submitted motion.

#### **(5) Support Social Housing Under Threat campaign and the 'Yes to Homes' campaign**

Councillor Seamons proposed his submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Fooks:

*This Council supports both the SHOUT (Social Housing Under Threat) campaign and the 'Yes to Homes' campaign. The UK's housing crisis is particularly acute in Oxford as evidenced by the well documented fact that the ratio of house prices to average incomes is higher here than anywhere else in the country. Additionally, there are well over 2000 households inadequately housed or without a home at all on the housing register, and this is likely to be an underestimate for the demand in Oxford for social housing. The unaffordability of owner occupation and lack of social housing has led to unprecedented demand on the private rented sector. Sharp rent rises there have taken rents well above LHA rates pricing many out.*

*The solution to the nation's (and Oxford's) housing crisis is simple – more homes need to be built. Further the council believes that a new generation of social housing should (and could) play a large role in this increased supply, meeting needs that otherwise the market cannot. Council notes that while this form of housing tenure has been facing multiple threats from government policy, demand continues to vastly outweigh supply. Council calls on the government to change its policy stance and to do more to support the building of social housing.*

*Council does not accept that the government's 'affordable rent' policy can meet the requirements for social housing since rents at 80% of market level would be*

*unaffordable for most people seeking social housing. In the council's planning policies there is a requirement for 40% of any new residential development (or a financial contribution to be made) to be social housing. The council has only accepted letting new council housing at affordable rather than social rent levels when that has been a condition of grant. In Barton Park, the city's largest housing development for a generation, the council will be delivering over 350 homes for rent at social levels.*

*In recent years social housing and social housing tenants have faced considerable challenges from government policy, including a renewed 'right to buy', welfare cuts and the introduction of affordable rents and fixed tenancies. The latest government prospectus for bidders for a renewed 'Affordable Homes Programme' states that "social rent provision will only be supported in very limited circumstances." This is an unhelpful prejudice against social housing, which the council has identified as critical to meeting the housing demands in our city.*

*This Council resolves:*

- 1. To ask the Chief Executive to write to local Oxford MPs: Andrew Smith and Nicola Blackwood, with the contents of this motion, and ask them for their support in lobbying the Minister for Communities and Local Government to ensure that submissions for grant under any future 'Affordable Homes Programme' that provide social rented housing rather than housing at affordable rents, are not prejudiced against.*
- 2. To further consider how the City Deal can support house building, particularly social housing.*
- 3. To support the Yes to Homes campaign and reaffirm a commitment to deliver affordable housing in Oxford.*
- 4. To actively engage with organisations and local groups campaigning or making the case for new homes.*
- 5. To support the SHOUT campaign and take a lead in affirming the positive value and purpose of social rented housing.*

On being put to the vote, **Council agreed to adopt the motion as set out above.**

## **89. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

None.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm**

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## Closing Temple Cowley Pools – A Political Decision

My name is Nigel Gibson, and I'm speaking this evening as the Director of the SaveTCP community interest company, set up out of the Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools to keep health and exercise facilities where the community wants and needs them, in Temple Cowley.

I'm speaking this evening about the consequences of Labour's decision at both the City Executive Board Meeting on the 10th December last year, and also the Special Scrutiny Committee Meeting on the 23rd December, and also providing you with some insight into the community interest company's response to this decision.

What was most disappointing about the decision making process was the lack of engagement with what we were proposing, both from the council officers, but also Labour councillors themselves. We are very appreciative of the support that both the Green members and also the LibDems provided in the meetings themselves, but also outside. Even our Labour MP, Andrew Smith, took the time to meet with us, and discuss the proposal in sufficient detail to then be able to explain its merits to members of the public.

The decision to close Temple Cowley Pools was, of course, a purely political one, as established by the Inspector when considering your Core Strategy. So the lack of engagement from Labour is really no surprise. But everyone should be in no doubt: despite repeated requests, we were never provided with a set of criteria by which our proposal would be assessed. Indeed, we still have no idea what criteria were used. We were compared for the most part with the £3.6m conditional offer from Catalyst. And conditional is the operative word here. If you had looked into the detail of this offer at the meetings, we would not have had to use Freedom of Information to establish that there is no guarantee that you will achieve this headline figure, so rendering any monetary comparison with our figure as meaningless. You also chose to pointedly ignore your obligations under the Public Services (Social Value) Act to consider the value to the community of any proposal. Our bid, taking over and operating Temple Cowley Pools at no cost or risk to the Council, can offer a value to the community equivalent to £20m a year.

So, what of the consequences? The rush to shut Temple Cowley Pools at 4pm on the 23rd December, without any notice to the public, followed by the immediate boarding up of the site on the morning of the 24th indicates that you knew exactly what the outcome of the meeting was going to be.

Interesting also that you have left the library car park available for use. For the moment. There were immediate complaints not only over the closure itself, but also the now very restricted parking. How many people are aware that the library car park is also part of the sale, and will disappear completely if the site is developed?

We have constantly highlighted the impact on the public of closure, and this is recognised by yourselves in your Core Strategy Policy CS21, although totally ignored at your decision making meetings in December. You have placed in the Core Strategy obligations on yourselves not to close a leisure centre if it causes a "deficiency in the area", and to ensure that alternative facilities are in a location "equally or more accessible by walking, cycling or public transport" – you simply can't argue that for someone who walked or cycled to Temple Cowley Pools, then any of the other leisure centres meet these criteria. And public transport is limited to one bus route. The claim that the new Blackbird Leys swimming pool is a replacement for people in Temple Cowley just indicates that you don't understand the area. Unlike the councillors who in 1963 built a swimming pool in Blackbird Leys recognising that it is a totally different community, in a totally different place, from Cowley.

The Campaign surveyed users three years ago around their intentions if Temple Cowley Pools was closed – something the council didn't dare to do because it would have revealed just how much opposition there was to what you have now done. This survey revealed that about 20% would simply drop any form of exercise. We carried out another similar survey just before Christmas. And again it showed that 20% of Temple Cowley Pools users would stop any form of exercise. It really is disgraceful that a council actively sets out to withdraw health and fitness facilities from residents through a purely political decision. We have received many emails from people about how they are exercising less, and having to travel much further at additional cost, as a result of the closure.

And what of the community interest company and our proposal? Well, it is still viable, it proposes a housing density in line with that mandated by the Inspector, and remains the best way for people in the Cowley area to maintain the health, fitness and independence away from the NHS as they grow older. And we don't intend to let them down, so are pursuing a number of options to achieve what the community wants to see. As at present we have no other way of challenging your decision, we are being forced reluctantly to look at legal action. But it's not something we want by choice, and I would invite you yet again to consider how best you can meet the needs of your communities, the ones who elected you to look after their interests, and who are now shocked to find that you have so readily ignored them.

## **Address to Council 2 February 2015: Greg Holyoke - 16 year olds and voting.**

There are roughly 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds living in the uk today. That's 1.5 million people who can work, earn money and pay taxes to their government, who can have sex, get married and move into their own property. Yet this 1.5 million don't have a say in the policy and government who controls/regulates these laws affecting them.

Surely if you are moving into your own home you want to have a say about rent caps or taxation. It also seems strange to me that if you get a job, you still won't have a vote to give you a say about the wage you're payed or what proportion of that wage goes in tax. There are young gay couples who may be under 18 but still want to get married, yet had no say as to whether they were limited by civil partnerships or not, who is it to deny them that right. There are so many things that affect change at 16, yet we are unable to affect what they are and how they change for us, whether it be about anything from joining the army or choosing a doctor, about relationships or apprenticeships or even buying a pet.

But that's only part of it: as someone who has been out on many political campaigns, nationally, locally and even internationally, it's very hard not to notice the rapid and inexorable decline in turnout. People just don't care about voting as much as they did, they seem resigned to believe that all parties are the same and more than that, their voice is not wanted or needed in our democracy today. If we can show, even just as a local council that we are supporting giving more people a voice, letting more people have a say in the agenda and politics of our country, it would be a sign to counteract the pessimist everyone of us will have heard when out on the doorstep or at a hustings. Giving more people the vote in scotland helped one of the highest turnouts in recent history, in no way am I purporting that giving 16 year olds the vote was the sole reason for that, but it certainly counted. We could see the huge media coverage it was given and the strong and passionate views from young people who were proud to be a coveted part of such a huge decision.

That passion can be heard in the corridors of schools throughout the country, just because it's harder to air them doesn't mean we lack opinions. But were we to get the vote I think you would be hard pressed to disagree that even more people would be even more interested in a wider range of topics. And countless pieces of research show that if you start voting from the beginning, you are far more likely to consistently vote in elections after, which can only be a positive democratic effect.

I know many of you are already in support of this motion, and that nationally parties like the labour party have pledged support to this. But to those of you who don't, who still have reservations I can only say I am 16, I watch the news, I take an interest in politics and have even been out on political rallies and campaigns. I am not the only one, so many my age have just as strong and formed opinions, many more so than a lot of 18 year olds. Yet we cannot truly show them. Also we have been in an education system overhauled during the past 5 years, yet even as a student we've had no say in our education. Hopefully you can see why that seems wrong to many of us and in combination with everything else why votes at 16 is the viable way forward.

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