

Minutes of a meeting of the COUNCIL on Monday 24 April 2017

www.oxford.gov.uk



Committee members:

Councillor Altaf-Khan (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Humberstone (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Brown (Sheriff)	Councillor Cook
Councillor Anwar	Councillor Azad
Councillor Brandt	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Curran
Councillor Fooks	Councillor Fry
Councillor Gant	Councillor Goddard
Councillor Goff	Councillor Haines
Councillor Hayes	Councillor Henwood
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Iley-Williamson
Councillor Kennedy	Councillor Landell Mills
Councillor Lygo	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Paule	Councillor Pegg
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Price
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Sanders
Councillor Simmons	Councillor Sinclair
Councillor Smith	Councillor Tanner
Councillor Tarver	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Thomas	Councillor Tidball
Councillor Turner	Councillor Upton
Councillor Wade	Councillor Wilkinson
Councillor Wolff	

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Abbasi, Malik and Simm sent apologies

Minute's silence in memory of Councillor Van Coulter

Council stood for a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Van Coulter who had died suddenly on 13 March 2017.

90. Apologies for lateness

Councillors Fry and Tanner sent apologies for their late arrival.

Councillor Goddard apologised for leaving the meeting early.

91. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

Matters which may give rise to public perceptions of bias were drawn to Council's attention:

- Minute 102: Councillor Sanders informed Council that she was related to Jo Sanders, who was speaking about a secure dog area
- Minute 106c: Councillor Humberstone informed Council he was now a trustee of Trax which is a social enterprise.

92. Minutes

Council agreed to **approve** the minutes of 6 February 2017 and 20 February 2017 as a true and correct record of these meetings and that the Lord Mayor should sign these as such.

93. Appointment to Committees

At the meeting, Councillor Price proposed and Council agreed that Councillor Lygo be appointed to the vacancy on East Area Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

94. Announcements

The Lord Mayor announced:

- He had held the annual charity dinner on Saturday 23 April: an excellent evening attended by about 100 people.
- Highlights of his recent visit to Kashmir.

He noted that the Rt Hon Andrew Smith, MP was standing down and thanked him for his 30 years of service to his constituency as the Member of Parliament for Oxford East.

He thanked the Chief Executive for his help and support over his year as Lord Mayor.

There were no other announcements.

95. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

There were no public speakers in this section.

96. Arrangements for the appointment of an Interim Chief Executive

As Chair of the Appointments Committee, Councillor Price proposed revised recommendations tabled at the meeting.

He explained that the Appointments Committee were interviewing candidates for the post of Interim Chief Executive. In order to allow a proper handover before the current Chief Executive left it was not considered practicable to wait until Full Council could be convened to confirm an appointment. Council must have an appointed Head of Paid Service as required in law.

Council resolved:

1. to delegate responsibility to and authorise the Appointments Committee to make an appointment to the position of Interim Chief Executive to replace Peter Sloman; and
2. that the Appointments Committee has authority to agree the start date and initial period of appointment and other terms of employment of the Interim Chief Executive as the committee considers reasonable; and
3. that the person appointed as Interim Chief Executive will, as set out in the Constitution, be designated as Head of Paid Service as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 4(1), from the first day of their formal employment in that role with Oxford City Council after the current Head of Paid Service ceases to be employed in the post of Chief Executive.

97. Constitution Review 2017

Council considered a report of the Acting Head of Law and Governance setting out proposed changes to the Council's Constitution.

Council resolved to approve, with immediate effect, the amendments to the Constitution outlined in the report and detailed in appendices 1 to 4:

Appendix 1 – Petitions Scheme

Appendix 2 – Contract Procedure Rules

Appendix 3 - Miscellaneous proposed changes

Appendix 4 – Annex to Whistleblowing Policy

98. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2017

Council considered a report of the Head of Business Improvement setting out the Annual Pay Policy Statement in accordance with legislative requirements.

Council resolved to approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2017 as attached at Appendix 1 to the covering report.

99. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Council considered a report of the Acting Head of Law and Governance.

Council resolved to note the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigative Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

100. City Executive Board Minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Thursday 9 February 2017 of City Executive Board

Questions asked of the Board Members on these minutes and their responses are listed below.

- Minute 127

Councillor Gant asked what had happened with the proposal to tender to provide cleaning services for the new Westgate Centre.

Councillor Price undertook to provide a response.

- Minute 129 (a) - Councillor Simmons asked for an update on the recycling incentive scheme.

Councillor Price said there was funding for the scheme for 3 years, but it was being reviewed as it was not providing good value for money in its current form.

- Minute 129 (b) - Councillor Gant asked if there were there any responses from MPs or from Westminster to the request for a debate on safeguarding language schools students.

Councillor Sinclair said the request for a parliamentary debate would be resubmitted after the General Election. She would follow up or complete the other requests in the minutes.

- Minute 130 - Councillor Thomas asked about the relationship between the right to buy and Oxford City Housing Limited.

Councillor Rowley said he hoped the position would be clarified by the new DGLC team after the General Election.

- Minute 131 - Councillor Wade asked how long a delay would be caused by changing the current boundary of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.

Councillor Hollingsworth said he would provide a response.

- Minute 133 (a) - Councillor Gant asked and Councillor Price agreed that partners in joint initiatives should receive appropriate credit and the oversight in the corporate plan should not be repeated.

b) Minutes of meeting Thursday 9 March 2017 of City Executive Board

Questions asked of the Board Members on these minutes and their responses are listed below.

- Minute 149 – Councillor Thomas asked whether this degree of power should be vested an interim post-holder.

Councillor Turner reassured councillors that while authority was vested in one officer, decisions would be taken more collectively.

- Minute 151 – Councillor Thomas asked if the scoping exercise for the proposed lottery would consider where the money would be coming from as well as what it would fund.

Councillor Price said the report would look at the source of income, and also the impact on other lotteries in the city to avoid competition and duplication.

c) Minutes of meeting Thursday 6 April 2017 of City Executive Board

Questions asked of the Board Members on these minutes and their responses are listed below.

- Minute 159 (d) – Councillor Fooks asked whether the City Council's views on the workplace levy had changed given the County Council's comments.

Councillor Hollingsworth said it had not.

101. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

35 written questions on notice were submitted. These, written responses, and 20 supplementary questions and responses are set out in the supplement to these minutes.

102. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Councillors Azad, Fry, and Tanner arrived and Councillor Goddard left before the start of this item.

Four speakers addressed Council and one speaker asked a question.

The full text of these speeches and question; responses from the Board Members in writing before the meeting; and summaries of verbal responses given at the meeting are in the supplement to these minutes.

1. Artwell addressed Council about the provision of football pitches in Barton.
2. Nigel Gibson addressed Council about meeting the needs of ordinary people (replacing health and fitness facilities in Cowley)
3. Joanna Sanders addressed Council asking for provision of a secure area for exercising dogs off-lead in East Oxford, preferably in Florence Park
4. Laura Coyle addressed Council about the petition on this agenda
5. Sarah Lasenby asked about the proposed salary of any interim Chief Executive and asked the Council to exercise restraint.

103. Petition - Help re-open Lucy Faithfull House Homeless accommodation

Council considered a petition meeting the criteria for debate under the Council's petitions scheme in line with the procedure for large petitions.

Council heard an address from Neo, the head petitioner. He spoke about the problems of the (by his estimate) nearly 130 homeless people in the city who needed a home and a safe place to go. Lucy Faithfull House would get people off the streets. Half of the people housed by the Iffley Open House project were in work but had no home - if they stayed on the streets they would lose their jobs. More and more people were forced out of their homes. He had seen at least 20 new people on the city streets coming here from across the county. These were massive failures by government. To solve the issues there needed to be collective responsibility: everyone needed to work together. There was a desperate need for the facilities Lucy Faithfull House could provide.

Council considered two motions submitted in response to the petition, circulated before the meeting.

Councillor Rowley proposed his motion, seconded by Councillor Turner.

Councillor Thomas proposed his motion, seconded by Councillor Gant.

After debate and on being put to the vote:

- Councillor Rowley's motion was declared carried
- Councillor Thomas' motion was declared lost.

Council resolved to approve the following motion in response to the petition, as proposed by Cllr Rowley:

Council notes the petition, and welcomes the support from the signatories for sustainable solutions to single-person homelessness in Oxford.

As elsewhere in the country, the rise in single-person homelessness is as a consequence of the government's attack on Social Security, its cuts in mental health provision, and its failure to increase the number of affordable and social homes over the last seven years in government.

In noting the petition, Council also observes that re-use of Lucy Faithfull House would not be a sensible proposition, because no need has been demonstrated. All of the LFH beds have been replaced by beds in Oxford with support provided, and existing homelessness provision is not over-occupied. Council also noted, in rejecting the Budget amendment referred to, that there is no way to make LFH sustainable beyond the lifetime of the Budget.

Council notes that its current approach to homelessness funding has allowed us to shield vital services affected by County Council cuts and maintain funding for services across the City.

Council also notes that it is untrue that "luxury" accommodation is intended to be built on the Lucy Faithfull House site. The site has potential to contribute to the Council's affordable housing strategy, although this will require an agreement with the leaseholder.

104. Outside Organisations/ Committee Chair report: Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership

Council had before it a report from the OSP Manager and Principal Economic Development Officer (submitted on behalf of Councillor Price) giving an update on the work of the Oxfordshire Local Strategic Partnership. Councillor Price said that a report on the future of the partnership would be presented to their September meeting.

Councillor Fooks asked for an update on the TEFL work. Councillor Price said that funding was channelled through refugee support groups such as Asylum Welcome.

Councillor Gant asked how the review of the Economic Narrative linked to Council policies and the Local Plan. Councillor Price said that the two would inform each other within the context and scope of each one.

Council noted the report.

105. Scrutiny Committee update report

Councillor Gant presented his report and paid tribute to Councillor Coulter's contributions to the work of the committee.

He reminded Councillors that they were welcome to suggest items for the committee's work plan and that should Council resolve to ask the committee to consider any matter, this would be added to the agenda of the 14 June meeting.

Council noted the Scrutiny Committee would next meet on 2 May then 12 and 14 June, and noted the report.

106. Motions on notice

Council had before it six motions on notice and amendments submitted in accordance with Council procedure rule 11.17 and published with the agenda and briefing note, and reached decisions as set out below.

Council adopted motions:

- a. Power to impose a tourist tax in Oxford.
- b. Making vacant buildings within Oxford available for the use as temporary homeless shelters.
- c. Supporting social enterprise.
- d. Joint working to address the needs of the boating community.

Two motions were not taken as the time for debate had elapsed:

- e. Opposing the Better Oxfordshire Proposals.
- f. Addressing concerns about short term lets via websites.

a) Power to impose a tourist tax in Oxford

This motion was debated before Minute 102 as there was sufficient time before the scheduled start of the public speaking item.

Councillor Wilkinson proposed her submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Goff.

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

Council resolved to agree the following motion:

Council notes that a number of local authorities are currently lobbying for the power to impose tourist bed taxes or “hotel levies”. These include Camden, Westminster, Bath, Birmingham, Brighton, Edinburgh and Cornwall.

Council also notes the recent support by the Mayor of London for the introduction of such a levy following the publication for the London Finance Commission by the GLA of Working Paper 83 entitled Options for a tourism levy for London. This report gives details of tourist taxes levied across the world in cities that have a high proportion of tourists.

Council recognizes that the British Hospitality Association is strongly opposed to any imposition of a bed tax, and that the VAT rates in the UK on hotel accommodation are much higher than in other EU countries.

Oxford is the seventh most visited city in the UK by international visitors and is the tourism gateway to the rest of Oxfordshire. The opening of the new Westgate retail offer is expected to generate increased visits to Oxford. Council welcomes tourism in Oxford as this brings many benefits to the City, however this does bring with it an extra demand for infrastructure and environmental improvements, and cost to the Council of increased workload in some departments, for example Streetscene and Parks.

Council notes that there are uncertainties ahead post-Brexit with respect to Oxford's economy, and that it may be wise to join other authorities in lobbying for the power to introduce and retain a tourism levy.

Council therefore asks the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to work with other local authorities representing cities with high rates of tourism to lobby jointly for the devolution of the above power. It further requests that Council writes to Oxford's two MPs to inform them of this Council's motion and ask for their support.

b) Making vacant buildings within Oxford available for the use as temporary homeless shelters

Councillor Thomas proposed his submitted motion.

He said he would accept Councillor Rowley's submitted amendment provided Councillor Rowley agreed a further minor amendment (read out at the meeting as *'the Council requests the City Executive Board to commission a report from officer to be submitted to the Board **no later than September 2017** on the process and procedures that could be used to make empty properties available for use as temporary homeless shelters'*).

Councillor Rowley agreed to this change and Councillor Thomas then proposed his submitted motion as amended.

Councillor Simmons seconded the amended motion.

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

Council resolved to agree the following motion:

Recognising:

- the growing number of individuals sleeping on our streets;
- the dangers of sleeping rough;
- the significant number of long and short-term vacant buildings within the city;
- the potential to move on with their lives and off the street (into permanent accommodation and employment) that a period of stable and safe accommodation could offer many of those current sleeping rough;

The Council requests the City Executive Board to commission a report from officers to be submitted no later than September 2017 on the processes and procedures that could be used to make empty properties available for use as temporary homeless shelters.

c) Supporting Local Social Enterprise

Councillor Smith proposed her submitted motion, seconded by Councillor Hayes.

Councillor Gant proposed his submitted amendment, seconded by Councillor Wade.

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

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion as originally proposed was declared carried.

Council resolved to agree the following motion:

Social enterprise is a business that trades for a social and/or environmental purpose. It will have a clear sense of its 'social mission': which means it will know what difference it is trying to make, who it aims to help, and how it plans to do it. It will

bring in most or all of its income through selling goods or services. And it will also have clear rules about what it does with its profits, reinvesting these to further the 'social mission'.

Since 2014 Oxfordshire has been designated a 'social enterprise place' by Social Enterprise UK: this designation recognises the variety of local social enterprises on our doorstep and makes it easier to stay informed about what local social enterprises have to offer.

As a council we already recognise that our procurement power is a mechanism for delivering and realising tangible benefits for local communities. Over 50% of the Council's spend is local to Oxfordshire with approximately 27% of this being paid to Small and Medium Enterprises. Social Value is also a key consideration when high value contracts are let.

This Council asks the City Executive Board:

to establish an officer group to identify any further actions to embed the Social Value Act and its principles across the council and encourage the use of local social enterprise suppliers; and to recommend to the Board Member any changes to the Procurement Strategy or rules to achieve this.

d) Joint working to address needs of the boating community

Councillor Wade proposed her submitted motion, accepting the submitted amendment proposed by Councillor Sinclair.

Councillor Landell Mills seconded the amended motion.

After debate and on being put to the vote, the motion as amended was declared carried.

Council resolved to agree the following motion:

This Council welcomes the work done by the Board member and City Council officers in consulting with the boating community, riparian owners, the Canal and River Trust and others on the draft waterways PSPO. This Council notes that on 6 April the CEB approved the following recommendations which were supported by the Scrutiny Committee.

These were as follows:

1. Not to progress the proposal for a Public Spaces Protection Order for the generality of the waterways of Oxford;
2. Commission officers to develop localised solutions to public safety concerns for four identified priority areas;
3. Commission officers to further develop policy proposals that will address public safety and antisocial behaviour problems and improve public enjoyment of the city's waterways resources.

This Council will now continue to develop the solutions on the identified areas with local stakeholders and particularly welcomes the investment and

commitment to improving the city's waterways. This Council now asks the Board member to request officers to continue working with the Canal and River Trust to explore a range of possible measures, which could, if practical, include the following:

- a) a sanitary facility on the Thames in Oxford - currently there is no disposal point for sewage between Abingdon and Eynsham (there is one on the canal at St Edward's but this is difficult to reach from the Thames). The disposal point could also include a waste disposal facility to save rubbish piling up.
- b) a caretaker boater with a boat moored at a city site, to manage over-staying, inappropriate behaviour etc. The City Council would provide a free mooring in Oxford (worth perhaps £300 – £500 p.m.) with the boater performing caretaking duties in exchange, initially perhaps 12 hours p.w. This proposal would involve no cost to the Council beyond the use of a mooring.

e) **Motion on notice proposed by Councillor Simmons**

This motion was not taken as the allowed time had elapsed.

f) **Addressing concerns about short-term lets via websites**

This motion was not taken as the allowed time had elapsed.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.25 pm

Chair

Date: Monday 15 May 2017

To: Council
Date: 24 April 2017
Title of Report: Questions on Notice from members of Council and responses from the Board Members and Leader republished after the meeting to include supplementary questions and responses

Introduction

1. Questions submitted by members of Council to the Board members and Leader of the Council, by the deadline in the Constitution are listed below in the order they will be taken at the meeting.
2. Responses are included where available.
3. Questioners can ask one supplementary question of the councillor answering the original question.
4. This report has been republished after the Council meeting to include supplementary questions and responses as part of the minutes pack.

Questions and responses

Board member for A Clean and Green Oxford

1. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Tanner - air pollution

Can the Board Member state what analysis been undertaken on the potential impact of increasing Park and Ride costs on air pollution in the city. Namely, if Park and Ride prices increase, and provide more revenue, more motorists may drive further into the city centre, where fumes will be more concentrated which in turn will exacerbate air pollution and lower air quality.

Response

For customers that wish to park for longer periods the City Council has encouraged motorists to use the Park & Ride sites. The operation provides customers with an efficient service into the city, whilst also offering low cost parking. The disparity between parking charges at the P&R sites and a city centre location is significant. As a consequence, the pricing structure adopted by the Council helps to ensure that Park & Ride is the primary choice for customers that wish to park for extended durations.

Whilst the City proposes to increase the charge at these sites in 2018/19, the tariffs in the city will remain considerably higher than the £3.00 proposed fee. It would therefore be most unlikely that customers would migrate from the Park & Ride sites to the city centre car parks.

2. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Tanner – standards we should expect for cleaning roads

I get regular complaints about the state of roads and pavements on residential roads. Leaves and litter seem to remain on some roads for a very long time. Can you set out the standards we should expect for cleaning roads, especially the gutters, and pavements in the city?

Response

All shop fronts and associated bins are maintained daily throughout the Suburban area. All residential roads, pavements and cycle tracks are mechanically swept on a weekly basis. Residential areas receive a fortnightly clean by the mobile crew and this includes litter picking, removing syringes, removing dog fouling and fly tipping.

With regard to leaf collection, resources are deployed on the basis of need. However, this is a significant task.

Concerns regarding street cleaning service standards can be reported to Streetscene via streetscene@oxford.gov.uk or via the Council's contact centre. Once the Streetscene Team has reviewed the nature of the report the issue will be dealt with either via the rapid response team or scheduled in the planned programme of work.

Supplementary question

What is the process if areas are not cleaned, and are there enough staff to deliver the service?

Supplementary Response

There are enough staff to provide the specified service and councillors should notify the Head of Service if there are shortfalls in the expected standard of service.

3. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Tanner – radio interview fall-out

On the 20th February, during an interview on Radio Oxford, speaking on the subject of homelessness in the City you said; "I would like to go up to some of these rough sleepers and say you are a disgrace" You later went on to say that you thought that they should have 'more respect'. At the last Council meeting you chose to issue an apology which referred not to 'rough sleepers' but 'beggars'. The text of that apology was later circulated – this too referred only to 'beggars'.

As I am sure that you are aware, rough sleepers and beggars are treated separately under the law and by the Council. As vulnerable groups, they have very different needs and requirements.

Following your apology the Greens politely asked that you re-issue your statement amended to refer to the group that you had originally wronged. You did not reply. Will you now agree to re-issue your apology amended as requested?

Response

I understand the councillor wants to make a political point. My apology of course referred to both homeless people and beggars. But street homelessness and begging are important, complicated and separate issues which deserve proper consideration.

Any of us at any time can find ourselves homeless for a variety of reasons. Living on the street is extremely bad for mental and physical health and should not be necessary in a civilised society.

So I am very proud of the £1,546,914 being spent by the City Council on homelessness prevention this year. But the continuing cuts in Government and County Council spending mean that street homelessness in Oxford is, most unfortunately, likely to increase.

I am very proud too of the City Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which enables the City Council to act against aggressive begging. At the same time I am aware that the Government is denying access to public funds for increasing numbers of people in desperate need.

Our advice to the public is not to give to beggars but to support one of the many excellent street-homeless charities in Oxford. The City Council will continue its policies of no-second-night-out, providing hostel beds for the homeless and supporting people to move into permanent accommodation.

4. From Councillor Brandt to Councillor Tanner - flood alleviation channel alternatives

The Environment Agency has stated that, even if the flood alleviation channel is built, there will still be a need to implement upstream flood prevention measures. Has the Council done any further work with the EA, collaborated with other Councils, or is the Portfolio Holder aware of any other relevant work, that looks at how the upper Thames catchment area could be better managed for water attenuation to reduce flooding as well as, or instead of, the expensive proposed flood alleviation channel.

Response

Oxford City Council collaborates with Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Water, Network Rail and the Oxford Flood Alliance on flood risk management matters within Oxford city boundaries via the Oxford Area Flood Partnership for which the City Council is the secretariat. As a district council, Oxford City Council lead in reducing flood risks from development in the floodplain through the planning system and the management of drainage and non-main river watercourses.

The powers to intervene in flood risk management matters relating to main river ('the Thames') and outside the Oxford City boundaries ('Upper Thames Catchment') would rest with Oxfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority for the County working with the Environment Agency which works on a regional catchment level.

For the reasons outlined above, the City Council has had and will continue to have limited involvement with Upper Thames Catchment Area investigation work.

Officers will be asked to write to the Environment Agency for an update on their work for the future in terms of the management of the Upper Thames Catch and let Members have a copy of the response.

5. From Councillor Brandt to Councillor Tanner – action on biodiversity

The Executive Summary of the recent The State of Nature in Oxfordshire Report 2017 (Wild Oxfordshire) concludes with the words; "The report not only outlines the losses

and gains in Oxfordshire's biodiversity, but is also a serious "call to action". We must encourage a greater, collective ambition for increasing our network of wild spaces, reducing devastating pressures on the environment, and halting the continued loss of biodiversity in the county if we are to secure a 'net positive' direction of travel in the future." What is the City Council planning to do to respond to this 'call to action'?

Response

The City Council has noted the publication of the 'of the State of Nature Report' and its call to action. We already have an adopted Corporate Biodiversity Action Plan for our own estate and operations and we will continue to examine what we as an authority can do as part of the development of the new Local Plan. A great example of what we as a local authority have done is encouraging pollinators for bees, providing bird and bat boxes, and introducing green roofs.

The City Council also has a good track record of working in partnership with a range of organisations to deliver biodiversity improvements such as: volunteering opportunities across our parks to deliver coppicing and wildlife survey; joint work with the RSPB and others as part of the Oxford Swift City project; and best practice with BBWOT as part of Wild Oxford, working in four of our nature reserves (Chilswell Valley, Rivermead Nature Park and Lye Valley, and Raleigh Park) to run events, talks, workshops on traditional conservation skills such as coppicing, hedge laying and scything.

6. From Councillor Brandt to Councillor Tanner - enhance the environment for butterflies and other species

Bearing in mind new evidence that urban butterflies are declining faster than butterflies in rural areas, will the City Council review its policies in consultation with local biodiversity and conservation groups to ensure Oxford's green spaces are a) protected from development which impacts on natural habitats and b) given new planting regimes that enhance the environment for butterflies and other species.

Response

The Parks and Open Spaces Team manages 26 countryside sites with the main purpose of maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of these sites. This has seen Acid grassland restoration at Shotover, restoration of hazel and blackthorn coppice rotations which favours woodland species of butterflies and finer woodland flora, reed management which sees the finer fenland plants able to flower. In addition to management on the specific countryside sites we also work with colleagues in the formal Parks which has seen us establish wildflower meadows, pollinator friendly beds and rotational hedgerow management. All this work is ongoing with plans to extend the pollinator friendly beds and wildflower areas. We work in partnership with a range of community groups and wildlife groups such as BBOWT and Shotover Wildlife. In addition we are working with the Wild Oxford Partnership at linking sites using green corridors that would provide a green and sustainable way for communities to visit sites and also see habitat improvements so that they become wildlife corridors.

7. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Tanner - Green Travel Plan for its Depot site in Marsh Road

Will the City Council implement a Green Travel Plan for its Depot site in Marsh Road, Oxford, as overspill parking is occurring in Owens Way and this is not welcomed by local residents?

Response

The Council has a workplace travel plan which includes a wide range of initiatives including encouraging staff to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share in getting to and from work. Some key city services run out very early in the morning from the Marsh Road Depot such as street cleansing, recycling and waste collections, often before public transport runs which can reduce travel options for employees. Within these constraints staff are regularly asked to consider how they travel to work with a view to reducing the number of journeys and cars on the road. To facilitate this, Direct Services has doubled the cycle parking provision at the Cowley Marsh Depot, introduced electric bikes at both the Horspath Road and Cowley Marsh Depot which staff use to commute between sites and allow employees to take our fuel efficient vehicles home so that they can travel straight to site in the morning. We also encourage use of the Council's cycle purchase scheme.

We realise that the parking in Owens Way and the surrounding area is inconvenient for residents and may prove a nuisance to them and we have asked staff to be considerate with their parking. We are currently reviewing parking provision at the Cowley Marsh Depot.

Board member for Culture and Communities

In the absence of the Board Member, Councillor Simm, the leader of the Council, Councillor Price answered supplementary questions.

8. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Simm (Hollingsworth) - old Rose Hill Community Centre

Given that residents' groups using the old Rose Hill Community Centre were given just four weeks to vacate the building in Dec 15/Jan 16 prior to a change of locks and demolition, can the Board Member explain why the site was left boarded up for more than a year before demolition started?

Response

The new community centre opened in December 2015 and it has become a great asset for all the Rose Hill Community.

The new centre was able to accommodate all the bookings from the old centre and a wide range of new activities so there was no point having two centres open at the same time.

Supplementary question

Why has the site been left vacant for so long when there is such a need for housing?

Supplementary Response

The initial plan was to dispose of the site to a private buyer for a capital receipt but we would like to offer it to Oxford City Housing Limited to develop as this should provide the best outcome for the city.

9. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Simm - The Oxford Marathon

The Oxford Marathon is a 13.1 mile race, run for the last two years through the heavily residential suburbs of North Oxford. The race has caused disruption to many residents but it now appears that it will be held again. The management company has apparently changed from GO2 to Virgin Sport, and the manager has also changed. A meeting for councillors of affected wards was offered on 16th February but was cancelled with a one line explanation: "meeting is postponed until a confirmed presentation from Virgin Sport is received in relation to Half Marathon or a 10 mile event."

Will the Board Member now undertake to arrange meetings both for councillors and for residents along the route as a matter of urgency?

Response

The Oxford Half Marathon takes place on public highways and the route and other arrangements relating to the event are matters to be agreed between the County Council and the event organisers. The City Council's events team will help to ensure that the event runs as smoothly as possible for participants and residents. The City Council's events team will coordinate a meeting with councillors once Virgin Sport have prepared the necessary information. Councillors who wish to hold public meetings on this topic should liaise directly with the event organisers and the County Council.

Supplementary question

Why do we have to wait until Virgin have made their plan of action? Can the events team organise a meeting so that we can have some input into this?

Supplementary Response

This is not a council event and this council has no responsibility for this. Concerns need to be raised directly with the organisers (Virgin) and the County Council.

Board member for Housing

10. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Rowley – council owned company business plan

In the budget debate, you were heard to say that the Council would re-develop the Lucy Faithful House site for social housing. How do you explain the fact that the housing company business plan shows only 50% social housing – the level of social housing that any private developer would be expected to provide.

Response

There are a series of misconceptions here.

The Housing Company must have a statement in its Business Plan that it will comply with the City's planning policy. This should be uncontroversial, and is a matter of form.

In fact our ambitions substantially exceed the 40% social housing plus 10% other affordable housing expected of private developers. 77% of the new homes to be built in the Housing Company's current schedule will be for social rent.

The other great advantage of the Housing Company is that it can build high-quality social and affordable homes at a time when in practice even the Council's minima are very difficult to obtain from a private developer.

As I said in the Budget debate, if and when an agreement is reached with the leaseholder on the future of Lucy Faithfull House, "we hope to provide permanent affordable housing on the site, which is in the long run the only real solution to homelessness." It is our Housing Company that makes possible a positive outcome from the County's sudden abandonment of this facility.

Board member for Leisure, Parks and Sport

11. From Councillor Goff to Councillor Smith - replacement pavilion in Five Mile Drive

With local elections almost upon us and still no replacement pavilion in Five Mile Drive recreation ground, another £2,500, or more, will be spent by the Council on using the existing facility as a polling station. Please can the member be specific about money available for a replacement permanent building, and offer a date to meet with local representatives to discuss the outcomes of a recent survey undertaken to ascertain preferences for both sport and local community use?

Response

There has been significant investment within the vicinity including completion of the £800,000 Cutteslowe Lower pavilion project (Sept 2016) and in 2013 we invested £390,000 into Cutteslowe Top Pavilion. There is currently no Council budget available to replace Five Mile Drive. We have met with members of the community earlier in the year and Summertown Stars on several occasions to talk through their plans and also to give advice and support on potential external funding pots that may be available.

Supplementary question

I understood that there would be a replacement for the now demolished pavilion at Five Mile Drive and that money was available. Please can you reconsider?

Supplementary Response

There is neither the requirement nor budget to provide a social space. Summertown Stars have said they need only toilets and a kitchen and we are working to provide these.

12. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Smith - funding raised by "events" in Parks

How much of the funding raised by "events" in Parks is retained for use by City Parks to repair and improve the parks, and how much is this as a % of the gross and net amounts raised?

Response

The Council invests a significant amount each year into its parks, both to keep them in good condition and on improvements. Recent improvements include modernised pavilions, play areas, fitness trails, tennis court, games areas and a new splash park.

10% of the income received for events in the parks is transferred to Parks.

For 2016-17 the amount Parks received was £6,940.

Supplementary question

Is this sum adequate to deal with the damage caused to the parks as a result of these events being held?

Supplementary Response

Any damage should be put right or paid for separately by those running the events.

13. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Smith - Green Flag Awards in 2017

How many parks and gardens has the City submitted for Green Flag Awards in 2017?

Response

Six and we retained all six.

14. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Smith – health and parks

As a matter of public health what progress has the City had in liaising with the County Council to use the City's parks and green spaces for improving health and well-being of Oxford's citizens?

Response

The County are one on many partners we work with. The establishment of the Green and Blue Spaces Network has developed closer cooperation and joint working between partners to increase access and greater use of green spaces in the last few years.

A good example is where we are working with the County, Oxford Preservation Trust and BBOWT is to devise and promote a number of green routes to encourage walking and increase the use of green spaces. This includes short routes for those starting out on the road to developing healthier lifestyles (and for 'green prescriptions') and long distance walks in and around the city.

Board member for Planning and Regulatory Services

15. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth - Novsca Article 4 Direction

The consultation period for the North Oxford Conservation Area Appraisal is now drawing to a close, although the extension of the consultation period to the 28th April is welcome. Many recommendations in the draft are similar to those in the previous appraisal and so there is a concern that, without an Article 4 Direction to remove

permitted development rights, the new appraisal will be no more effective than the existing one in preserving and enhancing the Novsca area.

Will the Board Member establish a framework for the creation of an Article 4 Direction and, if so, when is the expected start date?

Response

There are limited resources in the heritage team, and they need to be focussed on the completion of the current Conservation Area Appraisals. There are five still to complete, including the large Central Area one, which will take a considerable amount of time and effort to manage.

It is also important to establish a consistent city-wide approach, so I want to make sure that all CAAs are complete before the Council starts looking at Article 4 applications for each of them. This is to ensure a comprehensive offer across all the Conservation Areas - not necessarily a uniform Article 4 approach as views may differ from area to area - which can only be done once all the appraisals are in place.

It is also important for the experience of the Jericho and Osney Article 4 Directions to be fully and properly assessed before making recommendations on expansion to other areas. There are clear benefits, but there are also dis-benefits for local residents and on the development control process in handling the applications. An Article 4 Direction of this sort means a significant additional workload, which needs to be carefully costed in advance.

As for timescale, at present I would anticipate the remaining Conservation Area Appraisals to be complete in around 24 months' time, depending on the progress on the complex and resource intensive Central Area appraisal. Once that end date is in clear sight, the lessons from the Osney and Jericho Article 4 Directions and the resource implications of extending those Directions across some or all of the other Conservation Areas will be compiled and subject to scrutiny in the usual way.

Supplementary question

As this area is changing very rapidly around us can we reconsider the urgency of the Article 4 Direction as the need for it is becoming critical?

Supplementary Response

It is best to wait until all the conservation area appraisals are complete rather than prioritise one over the others as we need to know the overall impact for the city. Priority is being given to completing these.

16. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Hollingsworth - registering "developable" brown field sites

Did Oxford City Council meet the 16 April 2017 deadline set by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 of registering all "developable" (defined as suitable, available and achievable within 15 years) brown field sites within its area of authority, and if not when will the registration be completed?

Response

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced the concept of Brownfield Land Registers. Following this, the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 came into force on 16th April 2017. These regulations set out the

requirement that each local planning authority must prepare and maintain a register, and must publish their register by 31st December 2017 (paragraph 3(2) of the regulations).

Oxford City Council was one of the pilot authorities for the Brownfield Register and as part of that testing project published online a pilot register, with 65 sites listed, in July 2016; the position will be reviewed for the December deadline.

Members will be aware that the City Council is currently working on a new Local Plan for the city to cover the period to 2036. As part of that process, a thorough review of all available land within the city is being carried out. This has included a call for sites and the production of a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (October 2016, and also available on the website).

The City Council is actively doing everything possible to find sites that can deliver the much needed housing and required supporting uses to sustain Oxford's future.

17. From Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Hollingsworth – cancelling EAPC

The East Area Planning Committee was cancelled for April yet two meetings for it have been scheduled in May and a number of applications are expected by the Committee. Can the Board Member explain why the meeting was cancelled?

Response

No. Decisions about the timing of the different Planning Committees are the responsibility of the Chairs of those Committees, so the question should be directed to the Vice-Chair of the EAPC.

Supplementary question

Will the Board member investigate whether there is a workflow problem?

Supplementary Response

There is no problem. Planning services have achieved nearly 95% of applications determined in a timely manner. I am not aware of any issue with workflow.

18. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth – CIL income

How much CIL was raised in 2015-16 and 2016-17 and how much has been used or allocated for Green infrastructure in the same periods?

Response

In the years 2015-16 and 2016-17 the City Council received the sums of £2,046,195.67 and £2,295,922.69 from CIL respectively. This is reported in the Annual Monitoring Report each year. As outlined in the relevant legislation, 5% of CIL income is spent on administering the process of setting and collecting the CIL income.

Of the money received, 15% is the neighbourhood portion. This is passed to Parish Councils where there is one, and in areas where there are no parishes the CEB agreed to add £2,500 to each of the Members' budgets to be spent in line with the CIL regulations. The City Executive Board also agreed to spend up to £500,000 as a contribution towards the pedestrianisation of Queens Street, particularly focussing on the public realm.

The remaining 80% of CIL income is to support the growth of the City, and as allocated to specific schemes in the Capital Programme, which was debated at Council in February. CIL funds of £350,000 formed a contribution towards the construction and equipping of the gym at the Oxford Spires Academy; £1,490,000 is allocated to the design and construction of the Oxford and Abingdon Flood Alleviation Scheme; £1,134,000 is allocated to Westgate area public realm improvements; £1,200,000 is allocated for the construction of Quarry Pavilion; £1,600,000 is allocated to the Seacourt Park and Ride extension.

Supplementary question

Do you regard the Seacourt Park and Ride extension as green infrastructure?

Supplementary Response

No.

19. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt flood modelling

What flood modelling has been undertaken to take into account the effect of the proposed expanded area of Seacourt Park & Ride on the flood plain and the risk of increased flooding in the surrounding area?

Response

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment was submitted with the planning application which showed that there is no increase in flood risk associated with the proposed extension to Seacourt P&R. Further information will be formally submitted shortly in response to a request from the Environment Agency to demonstrate that this would remain the case when the anticipated impacts of climate change are taken into account.

Supplementary question

Is this available to the public?

Supplementary Response

Yes – it will be available on the website .

20. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt flooding

How often might the proposed Seacourt Park and Ride extension flood and what would be done to protect it from flooding?

Response

It is not possible to ascertain the frequency of flooding within the car park from the flood model data. In the absence of suitable modelling data, historic flooding records have been used to estimate the expected frequency of flooding for the proposed car park extension. Historic flood data has been provided by the EA, based on their records of flood warnings issued in the vicinity of the site and dating back to 1947. Taking into account all flood events since 1947, the expected frequency of the car park flooding would be approximately once in every five years. Taking only the last 10 years of flood data into account this increases to approximately 6 days once in every 1.7 years.

As the site is in the flood plain it will not have any special measures to prevent flooding.

Supplementary question

Flooding can happen very fast, rise swiftly, and cause serious damage to cars. What measures to prevent flooding are proposed?

Supplementary Response

I refer to the written answer

21. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Hollingsworth – Seacourt vs Eynsham

Has traffic modelling for the proposed expanded Seacourt Park and Ride taken into account the impact of the proposed development of a County park and ride at Eynsham?

Response

No. The traffic modelling to support the planning application was submitted as agreed with the Planning and Highway authorities (Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council respectively). Further information will shortly be submitted in response to issues raised by the County Council and objectors; this further work confirms that the bulk of users of the Seacourt park and Ride come from the A420 corridor, whereas the catchment for the proposed Eynsham site is described by the County Council as being "Witney, Carterton, Cheltenham and Gloucester". The two sites are therefore serving different catchment areas, and the planned Eynsham P&R – which is likely to be subject to the successful implementation of the major A40 bus lane scheme in order to create a sufficiently attractive bus service to serve it – is both physically and in terms of timetable sufficiently far off as to have a very limited impact on the proposed Seacourt extension.

Supplementary question

Are we sure that this extra car-parking capacity is required for the city, taking into account the spaces provided at existing park and ride car parks and the proposed park and ride at Eynsham?

Supplementary Response

We have looked carefully at traffic flows. Eynsham will take cars which would otherwise park at Pear Tree from the A40 but will not greatly impact on cars travelling to Seacourt who approach from different directions. Subject to planning consents, the Seacourt extension can be constructed quite quickly whereas Eynsham is much longer term and dependent on a number of factors which may prevent its construction.

22. From Councillor Wade to Councillor Turner Hollingsworth – Seacourt vs smart signage

Has traffic modelling been undertaken for the proposed expanded Seacourt Park and Ride that assesses the efficacy of smart signage on the greater utilisation of other existing P&R car parks around Oxford, up-dating motorists as to availability of parking around the city?

Response

No. Smart signage should improve the utilisation of existing parking spaces. However Seacourt is already regularly operationally full, and the future scenario modelling shows

significant increases in traffic on Botley Road if the extension is not built, and smart signage will not have a significant impact on that increase.

Supplementary question

Why can smart signs not simply be used to direct traffic towards other sites and away from Botley Road altogether?

Supplementary Response

This could be done, but traffic flow modelling predicts this alone would not help to remove traffic.

23. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Hollingsworth – Westgate parking charges

Have the Westgate operators informed the City Council what they will be charging for the Westgate car park and how will this compare with the cost of city car parking nearby?

Response

No. We currently expect that the Westgate Alliance will be making a formal public announcement about the charges at the new Westgate Car Park in the early Autumn.

Supplementary question

Why in the original planning permission did we not agree that we would have control of the parking fees with the Westgate Alliance?

Supplementary Response

I am not sure of all the detail but am sure a response can be provided for you.

Deputy Leader of the Council, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health

24. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Turner– social return on investment

Does the portfolio holder think that spending £4m on a car park extension represents a good social return on investment for Oxford's taxpayers?

Response

As things stand, I think the proposal does bring a good return on investment in social and financial returns. It would bring a wide range of benefits to the city in terms of economic sustainability, and traffic reduction, but also a financial contribution, converting one-off capital outlay into a regular revenue return for the Council's budget base, which can then be invested in frontline services into the future, helping insulate us from reductions in government funding.

Supplementary question

Do I understand that there is no direct social return, only a financial one, and an indirect social return?

Supplementary Response

This is social investment for the city in the wide sense of providing jobs and reducing traffic in the city, plus the revenue from income gives us the ability to provide other social benefits.

25. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Turner – children’s centres

At the budget, additional money was agreed to support the Children’s Centres. Have the Centres been informed of this additional funding? Have any applied for grants?

Response

None of the children’s centres have applied for support within our grants programme. We are currently working through how this funding can have the most impact which we will then talk through with the relevant organisations, and will then launch the programme of support as appropriate.

Supplementary question

Can we move this forward quickly before it is too late for the centres, and make sure all centres know the procedure; and ensure the small grants process is followed to get money to them quickly.?

Supplementary Response

Yes we can, although we have to remember this is not providing long-term funding.

26. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Turner – ward member CIL

We were earlier informed that any unspent CIL money (from the fund allocated to Councillors) would not be rolled over to the new financial year. But I am aware of at least one Councillor who has been told differently. Can you please clarify the situation?

Response

The City Executive Board took a decision recently, at its 9 February meeting, to roll forward Member’s CIL allocations for one year. This proposed they should be spent by 31 March 2018 and after that money would only be rolled forward for schemes that may be implemented over more than one year or for schemes that are in the budget report.

Minute 134 of the minutes – page 91 of your agenda – records this.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to ensure all councillors are fully aware of this extension.

27. From Councillor Landell Mills to Councillor Turner– covered market

What plans have the City Council to market the Covered Market to all the new visitors who will come to Oxford once Westgate opens?

Response

As part of our continued marketing campaign for the covered market we plan to re-issue a covered market leaflet/flyer to local businesses, attractions, hotels etc. This will

continue to be placed at the park and rides, railway station and other local tourist destinations such as Bicester Village.

We have also contacted the Westgate Alliance to explore any opportunity to include directional signage to the covered market from within Westgate.

There are also plans to continue with the outdoor events on Market Street and include the covered market in the Oxford Independent Business guide which has been launched this spring.

Leader of the Council, Board Member for Corporate Strategy and Economic Development

28. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price - unitary Implementation Exec

The bid for a single unitary authority currently with the Secretary of State envisages that, in the event of a decision in principle that the Secretary of State is "minded" to proceed, a statutory joint committee will be established, to be succeeded in due course by an Implementation Executive, both bodies including representation from this council.

Will the Leader take part, and/or nominate a member of CEB?

Response

The Council's response to the Secretary of State's decision will be determined at the time that it is known.

Supplementary question

Would it not indicate that the Leader has Oxford's interests at heart if he were to agree to take part?

Supplementary Response

I am not speculating or making a decision on any course of action until after the response to the County Council's bid is known which will not now be until well after the general election on 8 June.

29. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price – unitary transition team

The proposal for a single unitary council also envisages a "transition team drawn from the skills of all the existing councils". Will senior city council officers take part?

Response

The Council's response to the Secretary of State's decision will be determined at the time that it is known.

30. From Councillor Gant to Councillor Price – unitary spend

Could the Leader provide a statement of how the funding allocated by council for a "robust" response to the single unitary proposal has been spent so far, including:

- the cost of the petition and associated campaign

- the cost of the direct mailshot to all households
- whether the items above and any other items were authorised by officers under delegated responsibility powers

Could he also confirm that these and all other items of expenditure associated with the campaign have come from the funding stream allocated by Council for that purpose; whether any of those funds remain unspent; if so, how the remaining funds will be used

Response

Expenditure in response to the unitary county council proposals and the County Council's extensive publicity campaign has been as follows:

2016/17 Expenditure to date

Funded from the devolution and unitary proposals budget (£53,000 for 2016/17), and from the communications budget

- £6,800: for additional communications capacity
- £14,700: Ipsos/ MORI residents' survey
- £23,900: Distribution of the letter to residents
- £3,300: Design and printing
- £4,700: Advertisements

Budgets 2017/18

- A budget allocation of £75,000 was agreed by Council to fund future policy and communications work (if needed), in connection with devolution proposals.
- To date this includes a £17,000 to commission Deloitte for an analysis and report to respond to the unitary county submission.

Decisions on spending within the agreed budgets are delegated to officers with approval from legal and finance officers where required.

31. From Councillor Fooks to Councillor Price - City Representatives scheme funding

Can the Board Member set out how much Council funding has been allocated to the City Representatives scheme?

Response

The City's twinning links are highly successful and of long standing and the City Representatives programme is an initiative to increase the involvement of young people in twinning.

Through a programme of web-development training, travel, and event design, the objective is to create a community of young people who will be ambassadors for twinning among other young people in Oxford.

The aims are:

- To encourage more young people to get involved in twinning
 - o Participants will lead twinning activities and begin to develop groups of young people around each link who can plan their own projects

- To discover what activities would attract and engage young people
- To increase the profile of twinning by creating a more engaging web presence for Oxford twinning activity which is:
 - o Accessible for twin links to contribute to events calendar and photo gallery themselves
 - o Attractive and exciting for public
 - o Provides a one-stop information point for events, opportunities to get involved, and requests for help across all the links

The budget for the scheme is derived from three places:

- £950 from International Links budget 16-17
- £1500 from International Links budget 17-18
- £2500 from OIL grant 17-18
- Small donations from some councillors' ward budgets

Supplementary question

When will there be a report on this scheme?

Supplementary Response

I don't have that information.

32. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Price – replace SMT

What is the plan for replacing those members of the senior management team who are leaving the Council's employ?

Response

The Appointments Committee will be meeting on 24 and 28 April to consider candidates for an interim Chief Executive appointment. Should these interviews prove to be nugatory, an alternative internal interim arrangement has been developed. Peter Sloman's last day in post is June 16th. Peter has already put in place arrangements to cover David Edwards' post, and discussions about additional resources required to meet the demands in planning and housing are taking place currently.

33. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Price— council owned letting agency

Just over a year ago, the Council passed a Green motion (amended by Labour) which sought to address the high levels of private rents in the City. As part of the agreed motion, it was stated that the Council would 'in the longer term' take into consideration:

1. Setting up a new letting agency owned and operated by the Council
2. Operating this letting agency according to best practice by: (a) charging no fees to tenants (b) offering longer tenancies where appropriate (c) publishing and promoting fair rent levels

This letting agency should look at the feasibility of voluntary agreements involving "third-generation" rent controls (inflation-related rent stabilisation) coupled with strong

contractual rights (including first refusal rights on the next tenancy and flexibility for landlords wishing to occupy/sell and so on)

3. The Council may also consider offering accreditation to other agencies wishing to operate under this standard.

Has any progress been made on these 'longer term' actions?

Response

No. The recent regulatory changes announced by government can be expected to have an effect on the private rented sector and could potentially reduce the level of abuse of agency fee charges. As the impact of those changes becomes clear, there may be a case for revisiting this proposal. At the current time, our view is that it would be unviable to set up an agency of this type without a substantial subsidy. The private rental market is extremely buoyant, and of course, there is no budget allocation to cover such a subsidy.

Supplementary question

We did talk about what we could do to reduce rents. When will we start seriously to look at reducing rents in the city?

Supplementary Response

A letting agency does not of itself reduce rents: this is in the gift of landlords. We need a change in government policy before this will change. The letting agency proposal was intended to provide a viable means of helping to regulate the private rented sector: at the moment it is not so we are not pursuing this.

34. From Councillor Simmons to Councillor Price – EU nationals leaving council

I have heard several reports of non-UK EU nationals leaving employment in Oxford, and departing the UK, as a result of the uncertainties created by Brexit. Has the City Council experienced any such trends amongst its own staff? If so, has this created particular recruitment problems?

Response

Currently, there are a maximum of 146 Council employees who may be EU nationals (89 undeclared and 57 specified on the council's HR system (iTrent)).

Since the Referendum there have been 75 resignations from the Council and only three of these were non-UK EU Nationals – 1 Irish, 1 Italian and 1 Polish. 23 staff did not declare their nationality. Staff turnover for the whole organisation was 10.61% for 2016/17, which is the average for a large organisation like the City Council.

There have not been any noticeable recruitment issues stemming from the decision to leave the EU although it is clear that the number of non UK EU nationals who apply for posts that are advertised has fallen – especially for posts in City Services.

We have communicated our commitment to assist employees who might be impacted by the change of citizenship status, and have offered assistance to any employees who would like to apply for a document to prove their right to live in the UK, as a citizen of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland. The cost of this is £65 and we are offering to fund this amount on proof of application.

Supplementary question

Is there anything more we could do to increase applications from EU nationals?

Supplementary Response

This is a widespread problem, part of the wider effect of government policy. The uncertainty leads to fewer applications from EU nationals. We will do all we can to encourage people to apply, and suggestions are welcome.

35. From Councillor Wolff to Councillor Price – EU freedom of movement

The Council has previously voted to support the rights of non-UK EU residents living and working in the City. What is the City Council doing to publicly support and campaign for the continuing freedom of movement of people between the UK and the EU?

Response

See the answer to q 33, and in addition, we have established the Oxford European Association which will be a citizen led vehicle to campaign for the rights of EU citizens living and working in the Oxford area.

To: Council

Date: 24 April 2017

Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses

Introduction

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Board members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. This report will be republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This will list the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.
3. Where the speaker is a district and/or county council candidate in the forthcoming elections, their address and any response will not be published or broadcast until after the election in order to comply with the requirements of 'purdah' on local authorities. The speakers will be able to make their addresses to council.

Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda.

Addresses

1. Address by Artwell – As Artwell is a district and county council candidate, this address and response will not be published/ broadcast until after the election
2. Address by Nigel Gibson – meeting the needs of ordinary people (replacing health and fitness facilities in Cowley)
3. Address by Joanna Sanders - secure dog area in East Oxford
4. Address by Laura Coyle– As Ms Coyle is a county council candidate, this address and response will not be published/ broadcast until after the election

Questions

5. Question by Sarah Lasenby - salary of any interim CEO

In this address, I am presenting Council with a petition asking you to work with the community to replace the deficit you have created in Cowley, namely the provision of health and fitness facilities.

This is the 9th petition that the Campaign to Save Temple Cowley Pools has presented to Council. The very first petition presented to Council, at over 12,000 handwritten signatures, was simply dismissed as not being the whole of Oxford. But the support to keep the centre open was clear. As it was with the second petition. And again. And again. In fact, 7 more times, and with tonight's submission you have the opportunity to debate it for a 9th time.

Each time, the request from the community has been pointedly ignored by the Labour leadership. This is unfortunate, particularly as so many Labour Councils across the UK have chosen to work with the public they have been elected to represent, and so enable so many groups of people to maintain their health and fitness.

I need to remind you what we have lost. Or rather, what you have actively and knowingly removed from the people of Cowley and East Oxford. Labour decided in 2009 that Temple Cowley Pools should close. No discussion with the public, no real consideration of options, just a series of assertions which we in the Campaign duly picked apart – every one of the Council arguments for closure was shown time and again to be a combination of inaccurate, incomplete, misleading and untrue. We challenged successive Leisure Portfolio Holders on the City Executive Board to provide just one argument that could stand up to scrutiny. No-one was able to. Even council officers were tasked with this, and despite several attempts couldn't do it either. But, as noted by the Planning Inspector when considering the Sites and Housing Plan where the public's preferences weren't even acknowledged, let alone considered, the decision was a political one, not based on planning criteria.

And a year before you voted for closure, you commissioned two independent reports on the Temple Cowley Pools building, both of which didn't help your position as they said there was nothing wrong with it.

What was so great about this building? Well, to start with it was in the right place. You designated Temple Cowley as a 'transport hub', with over 20 bus services from across the City and beyond. This contrasts with the new Blackbird Leys pool, where you may have multiple services (well two to be exact) but they travel along the same bus route. And the combination of facilities in one place made it what it was. A diving pool – the only one in the whole of the county. You closed it as soon as you could, to save money. But it was well used and was precisely the sort of community diving facility that Sport England say is wanted to help young people develop an interest in an Olympic sport. A 25m competition pool. The only difference with the one at Blackbird Leys being it was designed with sufficient seating – a shame this wasn't done correctly with the new pool, because being able to hold larger galas was a principle reason the Swimming Club wanted Temple Cowley Pools shut. And as part of the new build in 1986, Channel 4 put in the cabling that enabled swimming competitions to be broadcast from there.

What else? Well, water that was low-chlorine – this meant that people, and children in particular, with breathing difficulties such as asthma, were able to swim there. No goggles needed. Again, the only pool in the county where parents could bring their asthmatic children. A desperately valuable facility – removed by Labour. And the list of features goes on – sauna and steam suite, gym, and exercise studio. Oh, and the changing rooms – open, not the much hated village style where you can't shower properly and you have to trail your belongings all over the place. Try going to Ferry, and see the number of swimmers using the dry change as an example of what not to provide people.

And the combination was unique. And enabled the women only sessions to be completely enclosed, and when you came to your senses and actually provided female only staff for them, total segregation. That's why they were so well attended, particularly by the muslim community. Compare that to any women only sessions now in any of your leisure centres.

And finally, being part of a primary district centre (the only one in Oxford) meant that you could combine a visit to Temple Cowley Pools with a visit to the library or the nearby shops.

And so you forced the closure in December 2014, and last year the demolition, of this facility. I noted at the last Full Council meeting the Labour leadership declaring that unfortunately you didn't have the money, and there wasn't anywhere to build it. Wrong on both counts.

Well, perhaps you would have enough money if you hadn't wasted it on the Blackbird Leys pool. The Campaign's request to take community ownership was fully costed, as part of which we discussed build costs with specialist contractors. We checked with them again recently. Instead of the £13m+ it cost you (or rather us, the taxpayers), you could still have built the Blackbird Leys pool for under £3m.

And where would you build it? Well, the obvious place is now a wasteland. Just outside the library at Temple Cowley. Shame you told Catalyst to demolish it last year.

You need to recognise what you have done. Closing, and now demolishing, Temple Cowley Pools, has left a deficit in the area. Most of the people who used to use Temple Cowley Pools don't go as frequently, or at all, to anywhere else for exercise. This is a disgrace in an area that has seen the biggest population rise in Oxford in recent years. What you have done has removed these facilities, from over 40,000 people. These are your own figures. And this is the "Blue Hole" you have created, and the gap we are asking you through this petition to redress. And it doesn't have to cost the Council any money at all. The community would work with the Council, and Catalyst, to raise the necessary funds to construct a new leisure facility that people want and need, where they want and need it. And it could be combined with housing. Very simple, and could be seen as a world class legacy, a final act by the City Council as local government transforms across the county.

The petition, with over 1,500 signatures, reads:

We, the undersigned, call on Oxford City Council to address the loss of health, fitness and exercise facilities in the 'Blue Hole', caused by the Labour-led City Council's closure of Temple Cowley Pools in December 2014, and extend for five years in the Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020 adopted in September 2015.

2. Address by Nigel Gibson – meeting the needs of ordinary people (replacing health and fitness facilities in Cowley)

Response from Councillor Smith, Board Member for Leisure, Parks and Sport.

The premise of the address is false: there is not an unmet need for leisure facilities in Cowley. The new Leys Pools and Leisure Centre is an excellent replacement for Temple Cowley Pool just 1.5 miles away. Cowley residents are also within easy travelling distance to public gym facilities at Spires Academy and Rose Hill Community Centre and Oxford University swimming pool where the council has secured a community use agreement is also within easy reach.

The data on participation shows that the council's strategy for providing leisure services has been successful. Since 2009 when the council entered into partnership with Fusion the overall number of visits to leisure facilities has increased 53%. Just less than 470,000 more visits when compared with the period prior to the transfer to Fusion

Overall participation has increased year on year by 129,699 to 1,445,813

- 27% increase in users aged over 50
- 38% increase in users aged under 16
- 32% increase in users with disabilities
- 12% increase in users from black, minority and ethnic users
- 28% increase in women and girl users
- 2% increase in 60+ swim participation
- 10% increase in under 17 swim participation

At the same time subsidy per user has reduced from £2.14 in 2010 to £0.07 in 2015/16, carbon emissions from our leisure facilities continue to fall, and customer satisfaction currently stands at 95%.

I understand why residents of Temple Cowley loved the old pool and were sad about its closure, and of course it will be slightly less convenient for some users to travel to alternative facilities. However the decision to close it was correct and the evidence shows that it has not resulted in fewer people making use of our council leisure facilities.

3. Address by Joanna Sanders - secure dog area in East Oxford

I would like to speak to you about the requirement for a secure dog area in East Oxford. In tandem, there is a national petition running with 3000+ signatures; the organisers support our local petition. Although this is a national requirement; I am initially focusing on the East Oxford area and Florence Park as this is the most popular dog walking park in this area.

There are many reasons dogs need safe spaces these include health issues, rescue dogs being rehabilitated, previous bad experiences, puppies in training, old or very nervous and shy dogs. The Yellow Dog UK Project which you will be able to find online covers the requirements in a lot more detail than I have time to in this speech.

I do want to make it 100% clear we are not asking to replicate the United States dog park model. Which encourages all dogs to be off-lead in dog parks; mixing dogs that are very well behaved and other dogs that experience some or all the difficulties I have already mentioned. This can lead to dog fights and bad behaviour being replicated. This proposal continues to allow well-adjusted dogs to have the run of the main park. The secure area would only be for dogs with a legitimate requirement. This would improve the experience within Florence park for the whole community; as family days out, football games etc would not be interrupted by off-lead uncontrolled dogs.

Dog attacks have risen by 76% in 10 years. Dog attacks are almost always preventable, if owners are responsible and the public are educated. This area will give owners a safe space and support to allow them to work with their dogs; which will benefit everyone in the community. As well as an emotional cost, there is also a financial cost the RSPCA estimate that the cost of irresponsible dog ownership in the UK was £80.5 million in 2014. Creating area's like this which are already available in many European countries will reduce both the financial and emotional burden of irresponsible dog ownership. It will also enrich the lives of the many dogs who require this sort of facility.

We will be following up this speech with our petition that now has more than 600 signatures and a detailed proposal.

We are not asking for funding and will be proposing a revenue model.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any further questions?

Written response from Councillor Smith, Board member for Leisure, Parks and Sport

Thank you for your address and petition. What is being requested is a specialised animal facility which is not commonly provided by local authorities either within parks or elsewhere on council land. I have asked council officers to look into whether there is a demand for such a facility locally, whether the council is best placed to provide such a facility and if so what the practical considerations for managing such a facility might be. I also attended a meeting of the Friends of Florence Park recently where this issue was discussed and it was agreed that local dog walkers would present the council with a proposal for consideration.

The mini golf at Florence Park which dog walkers have started to use as an informal dog pen is currently leased to San Remo and the council will be working in partnership with them on options for its future.

Verbal response from Councillor Smith

I know that the group will bring forward a full proposal for this facility and look forward to receiving this. Unfortunately using the mini-golf area for exercising dogs is not a long-term option. We will try and work with you on finding a viable permanent solution.

Questions

1. Question by Sarah Lasenby - salary of any interim CEO

Question to the Leader, Councillor Price

I am asking that the salary of the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) should be reassessed. This is specially because of the considerable increase in austerity and shortage of money to run some services; eg youth services in the bigger estates over the Easter Break and other things.

Will the Council consider reducing the salary not only of the interim CEO but of the regular one when appointed?

For Oxford to pay a CEO nearly as much as the Nation's Prime Minister seems to me to be very unfortunate if not disgraceful. So this is an opportunity to reduce the level of remuneration. Please take it and let me know what you decided.

Response

A formal response will be supplied in writing after the meeting.

Verbal response from Councillor Price, Leader of the Council.

Thank you for your question. The comparison between the two is not sensible because the 'salary' of the Prime Minister does not include all the extra payments of allowances and benefits the post attracts. The approach to paying senior staff salaries is as set out in the pay policy, considered and agreed earlier in this agenda, and this is the basis on which we will set the salary.

Motion not to be published during the County Council pre-election period to comply with the pre-election 'purdah' rules

Opposing the Better Oxfordshire Proposals

proposed by Councillor Simmons, seconded by Councillor Wolff

Green member motion

This Council notes the results of recent surveys and petitions which show that:

- 67 per cent felt decisions about services that are currently managed at district level should be made at a district/city level (IPSO Mori survey commissioned by Oxford City Council)
- More than 15,000 residents have signed petitions started by Oxford City Council, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire wanting to safeguard the local delivery of services
- 66 per cent directly opposed the One Oxfordshire proposals (County Council's own online survey)

Despite this, Oxfordshire County Council have submitted its proposals (backed by the leaders of the three largest political groups on the County), with limited concessions to public opinion and a branding change to 'Better Oxfordshire', to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 23rd March 2017.

This Council has previously expressed its opposition to 'One Oxfordshire' and does not believe that these amended proposals address its fundamental concerns.

Council therefore agrees to:

- **Formally state our opposition to the 'Better Oxfordshire' proposals and write accordingly to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and our MPs;**
- **Ask Scrutiny Committee to consider re-convening the Devolution Working Group to determine the best way of responding to, and monitoring, the progress of these proposals.**

Note: the film and minutes of the debate on this motion will not be published until after the election.

Reason for non-publication of this motion: regulations and agreement on pre-election publicity

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1986, the Code of Practice on local authority publicity, and LGA guidance, councils must 'ensure that any published information by them during the Purdah period should not contain controversial material that might form part of political campaigning during the pre-election period.'

And in particular, with relevance to the current debate about structures in Oxfordshire, the guidance says:

'Do not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views on proposals in a way which identifies them with individual councillors or groups of councillors.'

*'You should **not** produce publicity on matters which are politically controversial'*

