

18. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

(1) **Building Regulations** – (Proposer – Councillor Mike Gotch, seconder Councillor Graham Jones)

Council notes that Building Regulations are due to be radically tightened in 2013 and 2016, when new dwellings must be constructed and run to have a carbon neutral footprint .

Council further notes the ambition to lead the country in reducing carbon emissions, and therefore asks the City Executive Board

- to require the City Development department to adopt a strategy of requesting private and public sector planning and building regulations' applicants to begin to adopt those standards now, rather than delay that which will soon become compulsory, and,
- as an exemplar, ensure that all of the new Barton West is in full conformity with the 2016 standards, including a combined Heat and Power unit, to serve all new dwellings, but also existing Barton dwellings following a feasibility study to establish viability.

(2) **Institutional investment in Private Rented Housing** – (Proposer – Councillor Ed Turner)

Council notes the review commissioned by the Government into institutional investment into Private Rented Housing, Chaired by Sir Adrian Montague, of 3i.

Council further notes, with concern, proposals from the British Property Federation to this review, and associated media reports suggesting that the review will endorse these, which would allow developers freely to substitute institutionally-financed private rented housing for affordable housing provided through the planning process.

Council believes that there is a major shortage of genuinely affordable housing in Oxford. Council endorses the existing approach of requiring social rented housing through the planning system, and expresses strong concern that the "affordable rent" model promoted by the Tory-Lib Dem Government is not affordable in Oxford.

Council in particular resolves to resist any attempt to substitute private rented housing, at full rent, for affordable housing, as a result of the Montague Review.

(3) Potential impact of proposed developments - (Proposer Councillor Dick Wolff, seconder Councillor Craig Simmons)

Notwithstanding the general development permissions relating to particular sites in planning policies, this Council is concerned to consider in greater detail the potential impact of proposed developments which are subject to planning approval on:

- (a) sustainability,
- (b) vitality,
- (c) diversity and
- (d) ongoing development of local economies (both city-wide and at neighbourhood level).

Specific considerations include:

- (i) the financial viability of local businesses, particularly independents
- (ii) the number of people in paid employment in a neighbourhood
- (iii) the importance of maintaining economic diversity in neighbourhoods as a whole, in addition to concern about individual businesses.

Although the great majority of planning applications will not have significant implications for local economic sustainability, the Council deems it appropriate that where it is clear that a proposed development is worthy of concern with regard to the considerations described above, that an appropriate Local Economic Impact Assessment is made by Council officers and presented as an integral part of the officers' report when a planning application is considered, together with recommended conditions and mitigation measures where potential negative impacts are identified.

A Local Economic Impact Assessment will only be conducted when there is a clear potential impact on an area as a whole.

(4) Police Commission Elections - (Proposer Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Elise Benjamin)

This Council is concerned that the forthcoming Elections for a Police Commissioner are profoundly undemocratic. The election procedures make it virtually impossible for political groups that do not have the backing of wealthy sponsors to field a candidate.

With candidates having to pay a deposit of £5,000.00 and there being no freepost of literature over an area with more than half a million voters the election is effectively restricted to candidates sponsored by wealthy organisations.

Oxford City Council is concerned that political groups without access to great wealth by being excluded from the election are not able to forward their views on modern policing and by their exclusion deny voters a full spectrum of opinion and a real choice.

The only organisations likely to fight this election are the large wealthy political parties and affluent corporate organisations.

By restricting the type of candidate who may stand, the election is outside the British tradition that all elections should be open to all, pluralist in the arguments deployed and inclusive of all opinions.

The Council calls on the Electoral Commission to recognise the inequity of the present arrangements and to recommend that either the election be abandoned as undemocratic or dramatically reduce costs by introducing a free post system and reducing the candidate deposit to an affordable sum.

(5) North West London Airport Proposal – (Proposer Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Craig Simmons)

This Council is alarmed by the proposal submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport by a business consortium, backed by Chinese financiers, for a fifth London Airport to be constructed in North West Oxfordshire alongside the agreed High Speed Rail link .

Oxford City Council is dismayed that a consultation and bids for greater airport capacity is now to be held in view of the stance taken in the General Election of 2010 that there would be no further expansion at Heathrow and the abandonment of the arguments accepted at the time that this was economically unnecessary and damaging to the environment.

The City Council believe that such an airport close to the landing systems of Brize Norton and the glide path of London Oxford Airport is unnecessary and would bring greater pollution and disturbance to the area.

Oxford City Council urges the Secretary of State to resist demands for ever more airport expansion and to recognise that air transport is having a major impact on global carbon emissions and hence climate change. The Council urges Patrick McLoughlin MP to consider that, other transport systems offer a lower carbon profile and can be just as effective in meeting demand and to recognise that air transport is adding significantly to global warming.

This Council asks that the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State outlining the Councils views on this matter.

(6) **Night Time Economy Levy – (Proposer Councillor Craig Simmons, seconder Councillor Elise Benjamin)**

This Council recognises that areas of the City suffer badly from noise and nuisance caused by licensed premises serving alcohol; as evidenced by the introduction of a Special Saturation Policy.

The power to introduce a 'late night levy' has been granted to local authorities under new Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

This Council therefore asks the City Executive Board to consult on the introduction of a local levy on late night premises to pay for mitigating measures such as better policing.

(7) **Road Deaths of Cyclists – (Proposer Councillor David Williams, seconded by Councillor Craig Simmons)**

Although there has been a decline in the number of deaths of cyclists over the last ten years on UK roads by 49% the figures for Oxfordshire are not so encouraging with a corresponding figure of only 27%? (Office of National Statistics). From the County Council's own figures the majority of the decline in the County was in the first 5 years with the numbers of those killed or seriously injured remaining essentially static for the following five.

There is no doubt a number of reasons as to why this figure is so out of line with the national average figure, especially 2011 when the annual figure increased dramatically, virtually doubling.

With this in view the City Council will work with the County Council with three clear objectives in the short, medium and long term and take into consideration the Western European models of urban traffic management that generally see half the number of fatal injuries to cyclists .

The Council cycle plan will include:

In the short term, identification of accident black spots that keep occurring in the accident statistics and make recommendations for alterations in the traffic management that will improve safety for cyclists.

In the medium terms, recognise that a primary reason for deaths and serious injuries to cyclists is integrated urban traffic especially the mix of cyclists and very heavy vehicles and to move to limiting speed, weight restrictions and other planned traffic management proposals that will cut the number of fatalities in the City and surrounding towns.

In the long term, as renovation work progresses to adopt the European model of separation of cycle lanes and roads with a well

planned three stage structure of pavement, distinct separate cycle ways and road surface.

(8) Fair Pay – (Proposer Councillor Sam Hollick, seconder Councillor David Williams)

This Council understands that a more equal society is better for all.

We are proud, that Council staff, are now paid at least a living wage, setting a precedent as a major employer in Oxford that pay should meet the cost of living, rather than submitting to arguments about the market rate for labour.

This Council notes that between 2009 and 2010, senior executives received average pay rises of 23%, while the average pay rise given to staff taking into account the impact of inflation was effectively a pay cut.

In the interests of promoting greater equality, this Council resolves to:

- (1) Publish the highest-to-lowest pay ratio for directly employed Council staff, including all forms of remuneration in the calculation of pay.
- (2) Commit to distributing any further pay increases to all staff fairly, such that the highest-to-lowest pay ratio does not increase and sets as an aim to narrow that differential.
- (3) Request all organisations that hold contracts with the Council to publish their highest-to-lowest pay ratio.

(9) Affordable Housing Requirements – (Proposer Councillor Sam Hollick, seconder Councillor Elise Benjamin)

This Council believes that building new social housing is the best way of meeting the housing needs of people on low pay. Consequently, we are seriously concerned about the Government's planning reforms (announced 6th September) that allow developers to renegotiate agreements to provide affordable housing via appeals to Planning Inspectors.

This Council is committed to providing enough social housing, and instructs the Leader to write to the Secretary of State explaining how these reforms will undermine our attempts to meet housing need in Oxford.

(10) Loan Sharks – (Proposer Councillor Mike Rowley)

1. This Council expresses its deep concern about the activities of "pay day loan" companies which target people suffering from significant day-to-day financial pressures.
2. This Council notes that "Wonga", the most prominent of these companies, recorded a 225% rise in profits last year while charging interest rates of up to 4,000%.
3. This Council believes that the activities of these companies can trap some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our communities in a descending spiral of toxic debt. We strongly condemn "pay day loan companies" and believe the advertising produced by "Wonga" targetting pensioners and students to be particularly irresponsible.
4. This Council resolves:
 - (a) to support the campaign for caps on the costs of credit and a real time register to give consumers the protection they so desperately need;
 - (b) to request the Leader and the Chief Executive to write accordingly to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills; and
 - (c) to request the City Executive Board to ensure that sound advice on loans is incorporated into any money advice Council officers provide in the transition to Universal Credit.

(11) Universal Credit – (Proposer Councillor Van Coulter, seconder Councillor Antonia Bance)

This Council calls upon the Government to act with caution and that it must postpone the introduction of its Universal Credit.

The risks are great, yet the Government refuses to publish the risk register for the programme.

The project has already been delayed owing to problems with information technology - and the IT industry declares that the timescales involved are unrealistic.

Should the Government persist with its current aim of introducing the Universal Credit in October 2013, it will be a disaster. Whilst the trial to "prove" the fitness of Universal Credit is to run from April 2013, it is to be carried out in Tameside, Oldham, Wigan and Warrington – metropolitan areas with modest housing and living costs.

If pressed ahead, Universal Credit will be a disaster for people reliant on welfare. It will be a disaster for the district councils that the Government will expect to resolve the problems that arise, and it will be a disaster for the public as a whole, because they will have the burden of the cost for a failed programme of “reform”.

As it stands, Universal Credit has many predicted defects – as set out by more than seventy highly credible organisations.

There is reasonable certainty, that as it stands, Universal Credit will leave many single people and families worse off.

As it stands, people with disabilities and those who are currently unable to work because of illness face harsh fitness for work tests.

As it stands, the new benefit cap will badly hit larger families and people who live in places where the cost of housing is high.

As it stands, there are unrealistic expectations for lone parents with young children to go out to work.

As it stands, Universal credit will be paid in one monthly payment and normally to one person in each household.

As it stands, Universal Credit will disadvantage women – and by doing so, it will disadvantage children.

As it stands, the community action programme, or so called 'support for the very long-term unemployed', amounts to no more than an easy way for companies to get free labour and take advantage of people who have been unable to find work.

As it stands, people will be forced into low-paid jobs.

As it stands, poorer working people will be forced to leave their homes.

As it stands, the Universal Credit programme is, for all practices and purposes, unachievable.

This Council calls upon the Government to defer introduction of Universal Credit – less haste and give more thought for the consequences for this so called “reform”

(12) Day Centre Charges – (Proposer Councillor Gill Sanders)

This Council notes with concern the County Council’s plan to pass on a massive increase in fees for attendance at day centres from £10 to £25 per session - an increase of 150%. Many people attend day centres three times a week which would mean an increase from £30 to £75 and so they would not be able to attend the centres so frequently.

One of the biggest problems of getting older is isolation and this will only serve to increase the isolation of older people.

We recognise the need to make increases in the existing charges, and most older people would accept this. However the proposed increase would mean that fewer people would be able to attend the day centres and the fall in numbers attending would probably result in some centres closing, resulting in even more isolation for many older people.

At the moment the County is consulting on these proposed increases and we urge them to take careful note of the comments received during the consultation process and to consider very carefully the consequences of such an increase in charges and ask them only to make increases that would not have such a devastating effect on the older, most vulnerable and isolated people in our communities.

(13) Destabilisation of University finances – (Proposer Councillor Bob Price)

This Council regrets the destabilising of University finances caused by the Coalition Government's trebling of fees, attacks on the recruitment of international students, and the arbitrary capping of student numbers at individual universities.

(14) Educational Attainment – Key Stage 1 – (Proposer Councillor Jean Fooks, seconder Councillor Jim Campbell)

This Council

- * regrets that too many Oxford City children have not been reaching their potential at Key Stage 1, and later, for far too long
- * supports the decision to provide intensive support to primary School's in disadvantaged areas, and
- * believes that it is essential that the City and County Councils work together for the benefit of Oxford's children.

Council therefore asks the Leader to invite the County Council to nominate members of its Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to join in the work being done by this Council's Community and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee through its Educational Attainment panel.

(15) **Break the Bag Habit Campaign** – (Proposer Councillor Graham Jones)

Council

- notes with dismay that in 2011 the staggering number of eight billion 'thin-gauge' bags were issued in the UK. (This equals 254 bags handed out per second and represents an increase of 5.4% over the number issued in 2010);
- notes with interest that in Ireland and Wales, where there is a 5p levy on bags, there was a drop of up to 90% in the use of such bags;
- and that the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Keep Britain Tidy, the Marine Conservation Society and Surfers Against Sewage have launched a the *Break the Bag Habit Campaign*, calling on the Government to introduce a levy on single-use plastic.

Council reaffirms its wish to reduce litter as well as to limit environmental damage, and therefore asks the Leader to write to the City's two MPs requesting them to support the campaign.

(16) **Relaxation of Planning Regulations** – (Proposer Councillor Roy Darke)

The Council condemns the recently announced relaxation of planning regulations. The planning system has served Oxford and the country well over many decades by reducing sprawl and ad-hoc un-neighbourly development. The coalition delusion that less planning control will unlock pent up demand "for more affordable housing" (Nick Clegg) is wholly unrealistic and unlikely. Supply-side tinkering is not the answer. The main problem for new and expanding households is failure of the banks to lend money during the deep world-wide recession. Planning controls are not the principal blockage to home extension to family houses.

This is another example of the failure of the Coalition Government to understand that knee-jerk policies have unintended consequences when not properly thought through. In Oxford, and elsewhere, the proposed measures will open up opportunities for landlords and developers with capital to acquire and extend family homes for multi-occupation leading to poorly designed and overbearing extensions with loss of garden space and amenity.

(17) Erosion of affordable housing – (Proposer Councillor Ed Turner)

Council condemns the proposal to allow developers to appeal against Section 106 requirements for affordable housing and seek to have them reduced by the Planning Inspectorate. Council believes that with the dire shortage of affordable housing, coupled with the shortage of sites for development in Oxford, such a move will further compound Oxford's housing crisis. Council also expresses concern that a hiatus may result, with developers delaying construction of new homes until an appeal can be heard against the S106 requirement.

Council asks the Chief Executive and any group leaders willing to sign to write to the Secretary of State for Local Government, opposing this proposal which it believes is a further assault on affordable housing by the Coalition Government.

(18) Expansion of powers of the Planning Inspectorate – (Proposer Councillor Ed Turner)

Council opposes the proposal of September 2012 to remove from local authorities who fail to meet centrally set targets the ability to determine planning applications in their areas, and believes that such a move is an unwarranted assault on local democracy.