

18. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

(1) 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.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Dick Wolff to Loan Sharks – Motion (1) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Dick Wolff will propose an amendment to Motion 10 in the name of Councillor Mike Rowley as follows:

To add to section 4 a subparagraph (d) as follows:

“(d) to increase its advocacy of and practical support for local Credit Unions, including the Oxford and Blackbird Leys Credit Unions.”

The amended Motion would read:

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;*
 - (d) *to increase its advocacy of and practical support for local Credit Unions, including the Oxford and Blackbird Leys Credit Unions.*

(2) 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”

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Dick Wolff to the Universal Credit – Motion (2) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Dick Wolff will propose an amendment to Motion 11 in the name of Councillor Antonia Bance as follows:

To add an additional paragraph before the final paragraph as follows:

Further, it represents a missed opportunity to seriously explore a fairer, non-means-tested 'Citizens' Basic Income' system.

The amended Motion would read:

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".

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

Further, it represents a missed opportunity to seriously explore a fairer, non-means-tested 'Citizens' Basic Income system.

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”

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Craig Simmons to the Universal Credit – Motion (2) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Craig Simmons will propose an amendment to Motion 11 in the name of Councillor Antonia Bance as follows:

To add an additional paragraph at the end as follows:

In the light of the above concerns, Council asks the City executive Board to reconsider its decision to pilot Universal Credit in Oxford.

The amended Motion would read:

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”.

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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.

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

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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.

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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”

In the light of the above concerns, Council asks the City executive Board to reconsider its decision to pilot Universal Credit in Oxford.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Mark Mills to the Universal Credit – Motion (2) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Mark Mills will propose an amendment to Motion 11 in the name of Councillor Antonia Bance as follows:

Delete all of the words in the 15th paragraph after “As it stands, the Universal Credit Programme”

Insert the following new words – Notwithstanding these criticisms, Council commends the principle of consolidating working age benefits, and affirms the desirability of a social security system that recipients can readily understand and which eases the transition of out of work claimants into employment. Furthermore, Council believed that such a system could be designed without the flaws discussed in this motion. Council, therefore, calls on the Government to alter the Universal Credit Programme to address the weaknesses discussed above.

The amended Motion would read:

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.

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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, notwithstanding these criticisms, Council commends the principle of consolidating working age benefits, and affirms the desirability of a social security system that recipients can readily understand and which eases the transition of out of work claimants into

employment. Furthermore, Council believed that such a system could be designed without the flaws discussed in this motion. Council, therefore, calls on the Government to alter the Universal Credit Programme to address the weaknesses discussed above.

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”

If all three amendments proposed by Councillors Wolff, Simmons and Mills were agreed the amended motion would read as follows:

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”.

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As it stands, the Universal Credit programme, notwithstanding these criticisms, Council commends the principle of consolidating working age benefits, and affirms the desirability of a social security system that recipients can readily understand and which eases the transition of out of work claimants into employment. Furthermore, Council believed that such a system could be designed without the flaws discussed in this motion. Council, therefore, calls on the Government to alter the Universal Credit Programme to address the weaknesses discussed above.

Further, it represents a missed opportunity to seriously explore a fairer, non-means-tested 'Citizens' Basic Income system.

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"

In the light of the above concerns, Council asks the City executive Board to reconsider its decision to pilot Universal Credit in Oxford.

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Jean Fooks to the Destabilisation of University finances – Motion (4) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Jean Fooks will propose an amendment to Motion 13 in the name of Councillor Bob Price to:

In the first sentence, delete the words 'destabilisation of University Finances caused by'.

Insert 'but welcomes the extra support now available to students from poorer backgrounds and the raising of the earnings threshold before any repayments have to be made to £21,000.'

Then delete 'attacks on' and replace with 'It regrets the Conservative-led attempt to limit'. Add 'and welcomes the Minister Vince Cable's work to treat students differently from other would-be immigrants to the UK.'

And replace 'and' with 'It further regrets the arbitrary capping of student numbers at individual universities.'

The amended Motion would read:

This Council regrets the Coalition Government's trebling of fees but welcomes the extra support now available to students from poorer backgrounds and the raising of the earnings threshold before any repayments have to be made to £21,000. It regrets the Conservative-led attempt to limit the recruitment of international students and welcomes the Minister Vince Cable's work to treat students differently from other would-be immigrants to the UK. It further regrets the arbitrary capping of student numbers at individual universities.

(5) 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.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Dick Wolff to the Relaxation of Planning Regulations – Motion (5) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Dick Wolff will propose an amendment to Motion 16 in the name of Councillor Roy Darke as follows:

To delete the penultimate sentence from the first paragraph and replace with alternative wording, to read as follows:

The main problem for new and expanding households is

- (a) the legacy left by a lack of commitment to the building of social housing by previous Labour and Conservative governments, coupled with
- (b) the gross inflation of house prices resulting from 30 years of progressive financial deregulation, most notably the Financial Services Act 2001 which removed limits on bank lending unsupported by reserves, enabling limitless cheap but ultimately unsustainable credit.

The amended Motion would read:

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

- (a) *the legacy left by a lack of commitment to the building of social housing by previous Labour and Conservative governments, coupled with*
- (b) *the gross inflation of house prices resulting from 30 years of progressive financial deregulation, most notably the Financial Services Act 2001 which removed limits on bank lending unsupported by reserves, enabling limitless cheap but ultimately unsustainable credit.*

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.

(6) 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.

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

This Council

- * noting that the recent Ofsted Report singled out Oxfordshire's Schools for their poor performance;
- * regretting the fact that many Oxford City children have for far too long not been reaching their potential at Key Stages 1 and 2;
- * endorsing the decision of the City Council to provide intensive support to Primary Schools in disadvantaged areas;
- * believing that any progress will be limited until and unless the City and County Councils work together for the benefit of Oxford's children.

Requests the Leader to ask the Chair of the County Council's Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to consider nominating members to join in the monitoring work being carried out by the Educational Attainment Panel of this Council's Community and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Dick Wolff to the Educational Attainment – Key Stage 1 – Motion (5) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Dick Wolff will propose an amendment to Motion 14 in the name of Councillor Jean Fooks as follows:

To insert the words “in State-funded schools” in the first bullet point.

The amended Motion would read:

This Council

- * *noting that the recent Ofsted Report singled out Oxfordshire's state funded Schools for their poor performance;*
- * *regretting the fact that many Oxford City children have for far too long not been reaching their potential at Key Stages 1 and 2;*
- * *endorsing the decision of the City Council to provide intensive support to Primary Schools in disadvantaged areas;*
- * *believing that any progress will be limited until and unless the City and County Councils work together for the benefit of Oxford's children.*

Requests the Leader to ask the Chair of the County Council's Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to consider nominating members to join in the monitoring work being carried out by the Educational Attainment Panel of this Council's Community and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

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

This Council welcomes the increasing emphasis on reducing litter and protecting the environment .

However, it

- . * notes with dismay that last year eight billion 'thin-gauge' plastic bags were issued in the UK, an increase of more than 5% over 2010;
- * notes with interest that in Wales, where there is a 5p levy on bags, there has been a drop of up to 90%, similar to that achieved in the Republic of Ireland, that Northern Ireland is to follow suit, and that Scotland has put a similar policy out to public consultation;
- * and notes that the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Keep Britain Tidy, and the Marine Conservation Society have launched the Break the Bag Habit Campaign, calling on the Government to introduce a levy on single-use plastic in England.

Council would like to congratulate those retailers in Oxford who have switched to issuing paper or biodegradable plastic bags to reduce damage to the environment.

In keeping with Council policy, to reduce litter as well as to limit environmental damage, Council asks the Leader to write to the City's two MPs requesting them to support the Campaign.

(9) 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 23%? (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, seek to improve existing cycle lanes by removing gaps that leave cyclists unsure where they should go, maximising the provision of clearly marked separate cycle lanes on the road or on pavements if necessary and space permits, and investigating where off-road cycle tracks could be.

(10) 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.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Bob Price to the Fair Pay – Motion (10) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Bob Price will propose an amendment to Motion 8 in the name of Councillor Sam Hollick to delete all the words and replace with the following:

The amended Motion would read:

Council has noted the findings of a number of authoritative research studies which demonstrate that societies with a more equal distribution of income are more successful both economically and socially. It has also noted the successful reduction in poverty levels secured by the Labour governments between 1997 and 2010, and would support further measures to reduce the massive disparities in income in the UK.

We are proud that the Labour Group's initiative to establish the Oxford Living Wage as the minimum level of pay for our staff and for organisations that hold contracts with the Council. This has set a clear example to other major Oxford employers that pay levels should take account of the local cost of living.

Council notes that its pay policy is published annually in March and that this policy sets the ratio of maximum to minimum pay at 1:7. This policy is reviewed and approved annually and the Council will assess each year whether pay agreements provide any basis for a further narrowing of that ratio.

Council resolves through its procurement policies, to ask all successful contractors to publish their ratio of maximum to minimum pay levels.

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Amendment in the name of Councillor Sam Hollick to the Fair Pay – Motion (10) - (agenda item 18 refers):-

Councillor Sam Hollick will propose an amendment to Motion 8 in the name of Councillor Sam Hollick to delete all the words and replace with the following:

Council has noted the findings of a number of authoritative research studies which demonstrate that societies with a more equal distribution of income are more successful both economically and socially. It was also noted the successful reduction of poverty levels secured by the Labour Government between 1997 and 2010, although, according to the National Equality Panel, the gap between rich and poor grew. Council would support further measures to reduce the massive disparities in income in the UK.

We are proud that the Councils Oxford Living Wage Initiative (motion of 19th November 2007) agreed to a minimum level of pay for our staff and for organisation that hold contracts with the Council. This has set a clear example to other major Oxford employers that pay levels should take account of the local cost of living.

Council notes that its pay policy statement is published annually in March and that this statement reports the ration of minimum to maximum pay (1:7 in 2012). Council commits to setting the current ration of 1:7 as a maximum in future pay negotiations.

Council resolves through its procurement policies to ask all successful contractors to publish their ration of minimum to maximum pay levels.

(11) Bee Colony Collapse – (Proposer Councillor David Williams, seconder Councillor Elise Benjamin)

In line with the current petition to Government by Friends of the Earth, and the ever growing scientific evidence this Council is concerned that the Government has not followed the lead of a large numbers of European states such as France and Germany and banned the pesticides neonicotinoides.

With the recent publication of evidence from scientists at the US Department of Agriculture Bee Research Laboratory, the French National Institute for Agricultural Research and the UK's Keele University indicating strongly that the major cause of Bee Colony Collapse Disorder (BCCD) is the range of chemicals known as neonicotinoides this Council believes that there is an urgent need to protect bees in Oxfordshire from these potentially dangerous chemicals which are now being used in the UK.

The issue is of great concern in Oxfordshire for the area is known for its high quality bee keeping and breeding, the local honey firms and the large acreage that is under cultivation that requires pollination by bees.

Given that bees nationally and internationally play a vital role in maintaining food stocks this Council calls on the Secretary of State to impose an immediate ban on the pesticides sold as imidacloprid and clothianidin which are believed by the scientific community to be behind the phenomena known as BCCD. In following this approach the Minister will bring the UK in line with very large numbers of European states that have already banned the named neonicotinoid chemicals?

(12) Ethical Procurement – (Proposer Councillor Sam Hollick, seconder Councillor Elise Benjamin)

The Tax Justice Network estimates that £12 billion is lost to the UK every year due to tax avoidance by large corporations. This is money that could be used to pay for services provided by this council.

The practice of tax avoidance is particularly offensive in the current economic climate, where the funding of services used by the majority of people is being cut. Additionally, it is simply inequality that wealthy corporations and individuals should be able to avoid paying their contribution when the people of Oxford are paying their taxes.

Our duty to serve the people of Oxford, and our commitment to reduce inequality, are undermined by investing in, or procuring services from, corporations that arrange their operations with the purpose of avoiding tax. Therefore, this council

- (1) Resolves to adopt procurement and investment policies that seek to avoid companies that avoid tax;
- (2) Instructs officers to make arrangements to redirect current investment in tax avoiding companies.

(13) Badger Cull – (Proposer David Williams, seconder Councillor Craig Simmons)

The Council is concerned that although the Government has temporarily suspended its proposed cull of badgers the commitment to kill these creatures may be taken up again.

This is an important issue for Oxford where the badger is one of our largest native wildlife mammals and an important animal in the bio diversity of the City.

During this period of extended consultation the Council would submit to the relevant Government Minister the conclusion that a cull of badgers is not the most cost effective way to resolve the issue of bovine TB and certainly not the most humane.

The Government should be aware of a new vaccine that is now available for cattle that safeguards against TB and does not transfer antibodies into the food chain. Such a vaccine makes culling unnecessary and a waste of public funds.

The Council believes that the monies allocated to staffing the extermination units should now be directed to an inoculation programme which would be easier to conduct, ultimately far cheaper to deliver and would save one of the gentlest animals in the Oxfordshire countryside.

Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the relevant Minister expressing these opinions on behalf of the Council.

(14) Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) as a consultee on pub-related planning applications – (Proposer Councillor Elise Benjamin)

CAMRA, (the Campaign for Real Ale) is an independent, voluntary organisation campaigning for real ale, community pubs and consumer rights. Formed in 1971, CAMRA has 144,878 members across the world, and has been described as the most successful consumer campaign in Europe. CAMRA has an active Oxford Group including a Planning Sub-Committee.

CAMRA supports well-run pubs as the centres of community life – whether in rural or urban areas – and believes their continued existence plays a critical social and economic role in UK culture.

Council acknowledges that CAMRA have valuable experience that should be given significant weight when determining planning applications with regard to public houses.

Council resolves:

- (1) to include the local CAMRA branch as a statutory consultee on pub-related planning applications.
- (2) that officers should use the Viability Test produced by CAMRA for use by Local Planning Authorities whenever the viability of a pub is questioned in relation to a planning application.

(15) Government cuts and children – (Proposer Councillor John Tanner)

This Council believes that children should be protected from the Governments cuts in public spending. But we are fearful that child poverty is increasing in Oxford, and will increase further, under the Coalition.

Housing Benefit is now only paid based on the cheapest 30% of private rents over a wider area. This makes most private rents in Oxford unaffordable for many working families with children. Child

benefit continues to be frozen in spite of the rising costs of food and fuel. Benefits paid to those of working age are now linked to the (lower) Consumer Prices index instead of the Retail Prices Index. Many families will be worse off with the changes to the rules for tax credits.

More changes for the worse are coming next April. They include the "bedroom tax", the "benefit cap" plus cuts in Council Tax Benefit, Disability Living Allowance and the Social Fund. All of this is before the move to replace six existing benefits with Universal Credit beginning in October 2013. Yet more cuts damaging children's lives may be announced by the Chancellor on 5 December.

This Council calls on the Coalition Government to tax millionaires and not push children into poverty.'

**(16) Practically of monthly payments – The Universal Credit –
(Proposer Councillor Mike Rowley)**

This Council notes the serious concerns that have been raised about monthly direct payments of "universal credit" by many charities and professional organisations, with Crisis warning the Government that the system of monthly payments "fails to recognise that many employees are paid on a weekly or fortnightly basis, especially in low paid work. People used to receiving more regular payments may struggle to manage their finances across a month long period".

This Council deplores the potentially seriously damaging effect on gender equality and child poverty, as the Women's Resource and Development Agency have pointed out: "It is estimated that in 80 per cent of cases Universal Credit will be paid to the male partner in the household. This is a hugely retrograde step in terms of progressing gender equality and, we would contend, tackling child poverty. We are very concerned about the transfer of resources from the purse to the wallet and the backward step in terms of enabling women's financial autonomy."

This Council, further notes that Citizens' Advice have calculated that 8.5 million people in Britain have never used the internet and a further 14.5 million people have limited computer skills. We are deeply concerned therefore that some 37% of the population, almost certainly including a disproportionate percentage of benefit claimants, will find it difficult to obtain what they are entitled to if they have to apply online, and help in person is not easily accessible.

This Council believes that, at the very least, the category of "vulnerable" claimants, to be awarded exceptions from this regime of payment, should be drawn broadly, and include residents with problematic credit and debt problems as well as those with health problems or a disability making money management difficult.

This Council urges the Government to think again about the practicality of monthly payments and of online benefit claims; and requests the Leader and the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister making our views known.

(17) Affordable Childcare - Return to work programme – (Proposer Councillor Gill Sanders)

This Council is concerned at the impact on the return to work programme of the lack of affordable child care and urges the County Council to look at what is available in the City and what is affordable. Council further urges the Government to make sure adequate funds are available for to fund child care on an adequate scale.

(18) More investment in Money Advice – (Proposer Councillor Val Smith)

This Council urges more investment into money advice. The Universal Credit - the Bedroom Tax - the Housing Benefit Cap are causing lots of concern and families and others in the City will need advice to prepare them for these changes will start as early as April next year.

(19) Setting a carbon target – (Proposer Councillor Van Coulter)

Council notes that the long-awaited Energy Bill has at last been published by the national government.

However, Council regrets that the government has decided to defer making a decision about setting carbon emission targets until after the next general election.

This will distract focus from the pressing need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and for the urgent need to promote sustainable generation of "clean" energy.

Yet again, the government's actions show-up that it is not - and never was - "the greenest government ever".

The delay in target setting will make it hard for our nation to meet our long-term emissions targets under the Climate Change Act.

The implications of climate risk are clear. In many respects these risks are greatest for the most vulnerable, the poor and the elderly in our communities.

Climate risk requires action now.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister to spell out that Council deplores the omission of a carbon target from the Energy Bill - and Council requests that the leaders of all

political groups within Oxford City Council co-sign the letter to express our united concerns to the Prime Minister.

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