

COUNCIL

Monday 17 December 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Armitage (Lord Mayor), Abbasi (Deputy Lord Mayor), Sinclair (Sheriff), Altaf-Khan, Bance, Baxter, Benjamin, Brett, Campbell, Canning, Clack, Clarkson, Cook, Coulter, Curran, Darke, Fooks, Fry, Goddard, Gotch, Haines, Hollick, Humberstone, Jones, Kennedy, Khan, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Lygo, McCready, McManners, Mills, O'Hara, Pressel, Price, Rowley, Royce, Sanders, Seamons, Simmons, Smith, Tanner, Turner, Van Nooijen, Wilkinson, Williams and Wolff.

67. MINUTES

Council agreed to approve:

(a) Minutes (previously circulated) of the ordinary meeting held on 8th October 2012 subject to the following minor amendments:

(1) In minute 45 (Sheriff's Announcements) to amend the minute to read as follows:

The Sheriff informed Council that the annual Sheriff's Drive on Port Meadow had taken place on 10th September 2012 and while the date was usually kept secret, it had somehow been disclosed. Despite this, Councillors and volunteers had rounded-up 300 cattle in difficult conditions. On two separate occasions while the Meadow has been exceptionally water logged members of the public and vehicles become stuck and the local Fire Service came to the rescue.

(2) In minute 46 (Statement by the Deputy Lord Mayor) delete the word "amended" and insert the word "appended".

(b) Minutes (previously circulated) of the special meeting of Council held on 23rd October 2012.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Rae Humberstone declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 21(3) (Motions on Notice – Day Centre Charges) as he was an employee of the Oxfordshire County Council. (Minute 94 refers).

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sajjad Malik and David Rundle.

70. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Gill Sanders, Chair of the Standards Committee informed Council that Gordon Roper, Chair of the Blackbird Leys Parish Council had been nominated to sit on the Standards Committee as the Parish Council representative.

Council agreed to appoint Parish Councillor Gordon Roper as the Parish Council representative on the Standards Committee for the remainder of the 2012/13 Council Year.

71. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor informed Council of the recent death of Kevin Einon, Private Sector Team Manager (Housing) who had been an employee of the Council for 38 years, and the recent death of former Councillor David Townsend who had served as Councillor for the former South Ward in two periods between 1973 and 1986.

Council stood for a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

72. SHERIFF'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

73. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) made the following announcement.

Oxford Stadium – Closure

The City Council supports the retention of the Oxford Stadium site as a venue for greyhound racing, go-karting, fitness training and other leisure activities, and would welcome an initiative to bring back speedway racing, for which a large fan base still remains. With its first-rate facilities, the Stadium has a long-standing place in the affections of City residents, and it is regrettable that the current owners of the Stadium have not sought to build on the widespread support which it has maintained through the recent difficulties. The Council is appalled that the decision to cease operations at the Stadium was taken so close to the Christmas period and without consideration for the staff who work there. The Council's planning policy towards the site is clear; it is not included as a potential housing site in the Sites and Housing DPD, and remains a leisure and recreation site. As part of the City's leisure and recreation strategy, the Council would be happy to work with the current owners to identify an alternative operator who would be willing to continue and extend the current valuable contribution which the Stadium makes to the range of facilities that is available to the residents of Oxford and the neighbouring areas.

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

No announcements were made by the Chief Executive, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer.

75. ADDRESSES BY THE PUBLIC

Council received and took five addresses to Council from members of the public. (The text of the addresses are appended to these minutes).

- (1) Jayne Woodley – Surviving Winter Campaign 2012
- (2) Sushilla Dhall – Damage to Port Meadow
- (3) William Clark – Blackbird Leys Leisure Facilities
- (4) Nuala Young – Planning and leisure facilities

Following the address from Nuala Young, Councillor Mary Clarkson who had been named, asked for Nuala Young to provide her with the meeting and date of when she was alleged to have said the comments in Nuala Young's address.

- (5) Jane Alexander – Recycling in Oxford and Carbon Emission reduction

Following the address from Jane Alexander, Councillor John Tanner who had been named, said that he did not recall all conversations with Jane Alexander, but he did recall Phylis Starker who was a Councillor at the time and supported recycling wherever possible. He added that he would speak with Councillor Van Coulter (Board Member for Leisure) with regard to the recycling issues raised concerning the Temple Cowley Pools.

76. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Three questions were submitted by members of the public as follows:

- (1) **Question to the Board Member, Leisure (Councillor Van Coulter) from Gordon Waite**

Population figures and leisure facilities

The Council has recently published figures from the latest census showing that the highest growth in population over the last ten years has been in Cowley Marsh, a figure of 41%. Communities around the Cowley Marsh ward have grown significantly, over 20% in some cases. In contrast, the population of Blackbird Leys has grown by only 4%, that is by only 233. In the wards closest to Blackbird Leys it has grown by only 8%.

One of the main reasons the Council puts forward for a new swimming pool in Blackbird Leys is that some 10,000 people would be within walking distance, compared to about 6,000 in Cowley. These figures are based on the previous census; but the current figures from the Council demonstrate that the catchment area for a leisure facility in Cowley is at least as large

as in Blackbird Leys; and Cowley is in the heart of a group of communities that are growing and will continue to do so.

Why is the Council still intent on removing leisure facilities from these growing communities in and around Cowley?

Response: The new pool and the subsequent closure of the Temple Cowley and Blackbird Leys Pools have been agreed following a robust business case that detailed the benefits in terms of cost, carbon, access, participation, quality and sustainability.

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CompetitionStandardPoolFacilitiesAppraisalandOptionsReport.pdf>

(2) Question to the Board Member, Leisure (Councillor Van Coulter) from Nigel Gibson

Fusion Leisure Contract

The Council has consistently claimed that the annual cost of operating Temple Cowley Leisure Centre is over £500,000. The breakdown for last year provided by your Finance Department shows that most of this figure, £248,696, was actually a 'contracted management fee' – not a real cost like fixing the air conditioning in the gym, or bringing the diving pool back into use, but a figure paid to Fusion that was agreed when the contract with them was signed. In complete contrast, according to your website <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Procurement/Contract%20%20Leisure%20Services.pdf>) you paid Fusion £225,297 last year for operating all the leisure centres, which is £23,399 less than your claimed payment to Fusion for Temple Cowley Leisure Centre.

Can you please explain this discrepancy, and for clarity and in line with the openness you claim on your website, provide a breakdown of these payments by year by leisure centre for the whole of the contract term? If the payments have increased since the contract was signed, can you please explain the reason and the contractual mechanism by which this has happened?"

Response: The breakdown of the annual £500,000 costs for Temple Cowley Pools has been provided to Mr Gibson on several occasions. The contract costs vary if the council make changes to service such as when we extended free swimming in April 2012. The figures referred to were accurate when they were published.

(3) Question to the Board Member, Leisure (Councillor Van Coulter) from Patricia Wright

Community Facilities - consultation

If the City Council was consulting 8-11 year old schoolchildren prior to deciding whether to replace the existing Rose Hill Community Centre with a new £3m Community Centre on the estate, were children at the schools using the Temple Cowley Pools (both primary and secondary) asked at 'dedicated lessons' for their views on demolishing the present pools and

fitness centre and offering a new facility 1.6 miles away, outside the Ring Road, on Blackbird Leys?

Response: The new pool will have city wide appeal and as such the consultation took place on a city wide basis. The consultation process was very thorough as detailed on the council's website. (<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decLP/ConsultationonLeisureFacilities.htm>)

77. CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Lord Mayor asked Council to agree to a change in the running order (Procedure rule 11.6 in the Councils Constitution) to allow for the following agenda items to be taken earlier in the meeting:

Agenda Item 20 – Petition – Port Meadow, Oxford – Damaged View

Agenda Item 23 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule

Agenda Item 24 – Barton Area Action Plan – Inspectors Report

Agenda Item 25 – Council Tax Base 2013/14

Council agreed to the change in the order of business.

78. PETITION - PORT MEADOW, OXFORD - DAMAGED VIEW

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which advised Council on the procedure that it needed to follow under the Council's Petitions Scheme in respect of large petitions. The report also provided information specifically on the petition entitled "Port Meadow, Oxford – Damaged View".

Sushilla Dhall as Head Petitioner addressed Council on the contents of the petition.

Council debated the contents of the petition.

Councillor Bob Price moved the following Motion:

"Council notes the widespread concern about the impact of the development of postgraduate accommodation at Roger Dudman Way on views from Port Meadow, but that a fully valid planning permission is held by the University. Council also notes that the extensive level of consultation with public and statutory bodies, as set out in sections 4 and 5 of the report from the Head of City Development, fully met the requirements of the Council's procedures, and that the University also undertook consultation through a public exhibition.

As detailed in the further report from the officers, the conditions attached to the granting of the planning permission, relating to planting and screening are currently being determined, as are some amendments to the physical appearance of the flats. Council therefore determines to ask the Head of City

Development to bring forward as soon as possible in the New Year, a report setting out an assessment of the scope for further measures that are legally possible and that would contribute in the long and the short term to mitigate the impact on the views looking south from Port Meadow”.

Councillor Elise Benjamin seconded by Councillor Hollick, proposed an amendment to the Motion by Councillor Price as follows:

“To delete all of the words after the first sentence in the first paragraph”.

Councillor Price, did not accept the proposed amendment by Councillor Benjamin and following a vote, the amendment was not adopted by Council.

Councillor John Goddard proposed a further amendment as follows:

To insert the words “any general lessons that need to be learned from the handling of this application” after the word “out” in the sixth line of the second paragraph.

Councillor Price accepted the amendment by Councillor Goddard and following a vote, Council agreed:

- (a) To note the widespread concern about the impact of the development of postgraduate accommodation at Roger Dudman Way on views from Port Meadow, but that a fully valid planning permission is held by the University. Council also notes that the extensive level of consultation with public and statutory bodies, as set out in sections 4 and 5 of the report from the Head of City Development, fully met the requirements of the Council's procedures, and that the University also undertook consultation through a public exhibition.

As detailed in the further report from the officers, the conditions attached to the granting of the planning permission, relating to planting and screening are currently being determined, as are some amendments to the physical appearance of the flats. Council therefore determines to ask the Head of City Development to bring forward as soon as possible in the New Year, a report to the West Area Planning Committee, setting out any general lessons that need to be learned from the handling of this application and an assessment of the scope for further measures that are legally possible and that would contribute in the long and the short term to mitigate the impact on the views looking south from Port Meadow.

79. CULTURE STRATEGY 2012-15

Council had before it the report of the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications with a minute extract of the meeting of the City Executive Board held on 12th September 2012 (Both documents previously circulated, now appended).

Councillor Price moved the report.

Councillor Campbell said that he strongly supported the three priorities under the strategy and the support the Council gave to the nine core arts and culture

organisations in the City. However he was concerned at the membership of the Culture Action Group as many small organisations were facing difficulties and he felt that having a representative from the small organisations on the Group would provide them with a voice.

In response Councillor Price said that this request had been noted and that the membership of the Culture Action Group was being looked at again.

Councillor Wolff welcomed the comments of Councillor Campbell and said that churches and folk networks also tended to fall under the radar.

Councillor Clack welcomed the strategy, but the decision of the coalition Government to cut funding had a real impact on arts and culture, but this strategy made sure in Oxford that arts and culture were at the centre.

Councillor Williams supported the comments made by Councillor Clack and felt that the document tried its best on a very small budget and the amounts should be reconsidered, as this was an investment for the City.

Councillor Darke also supported the comments made by Councillor Clack, and stated that the Government was cutting funding to the Arts Councils grant and that new EBAC qualification would not have arts and culture included in it.

Councillor Turner said people had to recognise that Oxford was a small district Council and we were trying to do our best in difficult times, but the consultation budget protected the grants budget for 2013/14. He added that Members needed to be realistic on the amount of direct support the Council could give.

Councillor Coulter said that he was disappointed that the average tourist stay in Oxford was only 18 hours, half that of Cambridge and that more should be done to include the wider Oxford area.

Council agreed to approve and adopt the new Culture Strategy 2012-15.

80. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Council had before it the report of the Head of Customer Services together with a minute extract from the City Executive Board held on 23rd November 2012. Comments from the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 27th November 2012 were also submitted to Council (All documents previously circulated, now appended).

Councillor Turner moved the report.

Councillor Mills, seconded by Councillor Fooks proposed an amendment to delete paragraph 20 of the Officer report and to add a new paragraph 20 containing the following words:

To mitigate the cost of the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme it is recommended that the City Council consult on the following proposed amendments to discounts and exemptions as part of its budget consultation exercise which is due to commence in December 2012.

- *Exemption Class A – Recently built or uninhabitable due to work – 25% exemption for a time limit of 12 months*
- *Exemption Class C – Vacant – empty and unfurnished – 25% discount for a time limit of 3 months*
- *Exemption Class L – Unoccupied where the mortgagee is in possession – 0% discount*
- *Second Homes Discount – 0% discount*

Council following a debate voted to:

- Approve the inclusion of the amendment by Councillor Mills;
- Approve the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for People of Pensionable Age and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for Working Age People, as amended, both to take effect from 1st April 2013;
- Approve that delegated authority be given to the Head of Customer Services to enable minor editorial changes and corrections to be made prior to the schemes coming into effect on 1st April 2013.

81. TENANCY STRATEGY AND POLICY - APPROVAL

Council had before it the report of the Head of Housing together with a minute extract of the meeting of the City Executive Board held on 5th December 2012. (Both documents previously circulated, now appended).

Councillor Seamons moved the report.

Council following a debate voted to adopt the Tenancy Strategy for Oxford City and Tenancy Policy for Council Homes.

82. URBAN BROADBAND FUND (PHASE TWO) - OXFORD SUPER CONNECTED CITIES BID

Council had before it the report of the Executive Director, Housing and Regeneration together with a minute extract from the meeting of the City Executive Board held on 5th December 2012. (Both documents previously circulated, now appended).

Councillor Price moved the report.

Council following a debate voted to approve a £300,000 capital commitment and a £25,000 revenue commitment for staff resources as required by the successful bid.

Council adjourned at 7.20pm and reconvened at 8.00pm

83. OXFORD HERITAGE ASSETS REGISTER - CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Council had before it the report of the Head of City Development together with a minute extract from the City Executive Board held on 5th December 2012. (Both documents previously circulated, now appended).

Councillor Cook moved the report.

Council following a debate voted to endorse the proposal for a Heritage Assets Register and adopt the criteria and selection process as detailed in the report.

84. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE

Council had before it the report of the Head of City Development together with a minute extract from the City Executive Board held on 5th December 2012. (Both documents previously circulated, now appended).

Councillor Turner moved the report.

Councillor Mills seconded by Councillor Campbell proposed an amendment to the Officer report to delete the whole of paragraph 28 and to insert a new paragraph 28 with the following words:

"It is recommended that the City Council establishes a presumption against offering discretionary relief. The system has inbuilt flexibility allowing for in kind contributions and negotiation of onsite S106 contributions including affordable housing which can be explored in the cases of demonstrable viability risks. However, the City Council would retain the right in exceptional circumstances to offer discretionary relief where not doing so would jeopardise socially advantageous developments in accordance with the conditions of regulation 55 of Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 948"

Council following a debate voted on the proposed amendment, and agreed not to adopt the amendment.

Council voted on the substantive recommendation and agreed to:

- (1) approve the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule for consultation under Regulation 16 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (amended 2011 and 2012);
- (2) approve the CIL Draft Charging Schedule for submission to the Secretary of State under Regulation 19 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (amended 2011 and 2012) ;
- (3) authorise the Head of City Development to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document before publication and submission; and
- (4) approve a CIL instalments policy to facilitate CIL implementation.

85. BARTON AREA ACTION PLAN - INSPECTORS REPORT

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought approval of the Barton Area Action Plan (AAP).

Councillor Cook moved the report.

Councillors debated the report and Councillor Haines raised particular concerns of residents in the Marston area over flooding, sewerage issues and traffic. He felt that before any development went ahead it was important that the infrastructure was safety put in place first.

Council following a debate agreed:

- (1) To note the conclusions and recommendations of the Inspector's Report on the examination into the Barton Area Action Plan (AAP);
- (2) To adopt the Barton AAP as part of Oxford's Local Plan;
- (3) To endorse the AAP's associated documents as part of the AAP adoption (including the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Adoption Statement and Equalities Impact Assessment).

86. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2013/14

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) the purpose of which was to set the "Council Tax Base" for 2013/14 as required by Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

Councillor Turner moved the report.

Council following a debate agreed:

- (a) That the 2013/14 Council Tax Base for the City Council's area as a whole be set at 41,291 (calculation shown in Appendix 1 of the report);
- (b) That the projected level of collection be set at 97%;
- (c) That the following tax bases for each of the Parishes, and for the Unparished area of the City (calculations shown in Appendix 2 of the report) be set as follows:

Unparished Area of the City	34,520
Littlemore Parish	1,612
Old Marston Parish	1,198
Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish	1,373
Blackbird Leys Parish	2,588
<u>City Council Total</u>	<u>41,291</u>

- (d) That completion of the NNDR1 form be delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer;

- (e) That the Head of Finance provide Members with further information on paragraphs 7 and 8 (effect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme on the Tax Base) of the report.

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

Council had before it minutes (previously circulated, now appended) of the City Executive Board and Single Executive Member meeting held since the last meeting of Full Council.

(a) City Executive Board Decisions – 23 November 2012 (Minutes)

Minute 52 – Tenant and Resident Involvement Strategy – Councillor Benjamin asked why was this being changed again? There had previously been a Housing Advisory Board which had tenant representatives, but this was disbanded. Was this a case of the Leadership not liking what they heard from tenants’?

Councillor Seamons said there had been only one Panel with very few members and it was right to rejuvenate tenant participation. The proposals had been widely consulted on and the Chair of the Tenants’ Involvement Monitoring Panel (IMP) had been fully involved.

Minute 53 – Oxpens Meadow – Deed of Dedication – Councillor Benjamin said that she welcomed this, but it should include all of the Meadow and especially the part behind the Ice Rink.

Councillor Tanner said that there had been full consultation with the St. Ebbe’s New Development Residents Association (SENDRA) and that while the part behind the Ice Rink had not been included, it did not mean that this part would be developed on.

(b) City Executive Board Decisions – 5 December 2012 (Minutes)

Minute 57 – Scrutiny Committee Reports – Councillor Fooks welcomed the City Executive Board recommendations (1), (2) and (3) regarding “Area Forums – Review of the first year” especially recommendation (1).

Councillor Simmons asked what the timescale would be for the implementation of the recommendations and requested a written response.

Minute 59 – Procurement Strategy 2013-2016 – Councillor Simmons was surprised that recommendation (3) from the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee had not been accepted by the City Executive Board.

Councillor Turner said that this recommendation had appeared very late and so could not be agreed to at that stage.

Minute 63 – Domestic Waste and Recycling Collection – Policy Change for sites with communal bin storage and houses in multiple occupation –

Councillor Jones welcomed the change in policy, but asked if Officer resources were available to give advice.

Councillor Tanner said that the policy had already been implemented for Council properties and it was working well. He welcomed Councillor Jones support for the policy and felt that this policy responded to tenants in the private sector who had been pressing for better recycling facilities.

Minute 66 – Planning Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12 – Councillor Goddard welcomed that this City Executive Board had met at the Old Fire Station rather than the Town Hall, and hoped that it would meet outside of the Town Hall on more occasions. He noted that the minutes said that his questions were appended, but were not and requested that in future anything appended to the minutes of the City Executive Board were also presented to Council.

Councillor Simmons asked that the Head of City Development circulate to Members the mid year figures when available on the University housing targets.

(b) Single Executive Member Decisions (Minutes)

- (1) Minutes of the Single Executive Member Decision meeting (Board Member Finance and Efficiency) held on 11th October 2012. (previously circulated, now appended)

88. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY AND OTHER COMMITTEES

Council received no recommendations or reports from Scrutiny and other Committees.

89. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

(a) Questions notified in time for replies to be provided before the Council meeting

- (1) **Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Jean Fooks**

Oxford City Cycle funds

Oxford Cycle City money was allocated in the budget in February. Consultation on how to spend it has been protracted yet most residents have not heard of it. Can Council be assured that there will be a fair and transparent process of distribution of the funds?

Response: The Cycle City Plan was signed off by City Executive Board (CEB) in July. Before that it was prepared in consultation with key stakeholder groups with specific interest in cycling and all Councillors were invited to suggest ideas for improvements in June. Since CEB agreed the basis for proceeding to spend the

budget in the short, medium, and long term, there has been full public consultation in October and November with extensive publicity inviting suggestions for small net improvements that can be carried out immediately. Decisions on specific spend following this consultation will be agreed by the City/County Council Transport bi-lateral meeting. Therefore there has already been a fair and transparent process of distribution of the funds.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked what did the City Executive Board mean by full consultation, and which Members would be involved.

In response Councillor Cook said that he had received many calls from the Oxford Mail on this issue, and acknowledged that more consultation could always be conducted, but he preferred to spend funds on the actual physical measures having spoken to the right people/organisations in the first place. Regarding which Members would be involved, he confirmed that it would be himself and County Councillor Rodney Rose.

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

Community Linking Places Fund

Norman Baker MP, LibDem Minister for Transport, has just announced an additional £20m for infrastructure projects to support cycling. It is specifically aimed at increasing funds available for the Community Linking Places Fund and to Improving cycle safety at junctions. Has Oxford submitted a bid to this fund?

Response: The only appropriate body able to bid for this money was Oxfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority. The City Council pressed the County Council to bid for project(s) in the City on at least two separate occasions. Initially the County was intending to do so but subsequently decided to submit only a single County bid for Abingdon. The deadline was the end of November.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked which projects did the City Council suggest, and were they aware that an additional £20m in funding was available.

In response Councillor Cook said that Officers had put forward at least two schemes, but these had been rejected by the County Council.

(3) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor John Goddard

Annual Planning Report

How does the Executive member propose to remedy the regrettable recent shift reported in the Annual Planning report in the proportion of new housing units away from 3-bed to 1-bed?

Response: In previous years since the introduction of the Balance of Dwelling (BoD) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), there has been an increase in the proportion of family units. Last year saw a reversal of this trend, which is most likely due to the fact that the majority of the homes built in the 2011/12 monitoring year were on small sites. It is often more feasible to achieve a balanced mix of housing units on larger sites than it is on small infill sites, where site specific factors may limit the opportunity to provide family-sized units. It is considered that the figures for last year are a one-off and I am confident that there is no need to amend the Council BODs policy. However this will continue to be carefully monitored in future years.

Councillor Goddard in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that in New Barton, there would be a one-off chance to build more family sized units.

In response Councillor Cook said that the proposals were fully "Balance of Dwellings (BoD's) compliant which delivered more family sized units and he would continue to lobby the Government for further funding to provide more accommodation of this type.

(4) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor John Goddard

Affordable home target

Will the Executive member review the target number of affordable homes to be built over the next few years in view of the collapse down to 18 over the last year of the number completed and the opportunities about to become available for a substantial increase in these numbers?

Response: The target in the Annual Monitoring Report is derived from the Core Strategy which proposes 400 dwellings per annum of which 200 should be affordable. The intention is that this is a long term target that over time evens out any year to year variances in the housing market. There is no need to review the target in response to a single year's results. An under performance in one year, has and will, be compensated for by an over performance in another year.

Councillor Goddard in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member accepted that what he called over performance was still not enough.

In response Councillor Cook said that performance was measured against the lifetime of the target. In some years we could over achieve, but not in others. He was saddened that only 18 units had been built this year, but the current national economic situation being experienced was not helping.

(5) Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor John Goddard

Workable Transport Solution – The Northern Gateway

Will the Executive member estimate the likelihood of establishing over the foreseeable future the "workable transport solution" that is the pre-requisite to starting work on the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan process?

Response: The City Council is actively working with the County Council and the landowners to seek a workable transport solution to allow the Northern Gateway AAP to proceed. Until the current feasibility work is completed we cannot give a timescale or any certainty that a "workable transport solution" is likely or not.

(6) Question to the Board Member, Young People, Education and Community Development (Councillor Steve Curran) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Community Noticeboards - Access

Can the Executive member explain why councillors are not allowed to have keys for community notice boards in their ward? Does he think that a weekly visit to display notices from the keyholder, who lives some distance away, is adequate?

Response: The aim of community noticeboards is to inform local people about what is going on in their area; providing information from Oxford City Council, the Police and other partner organisations as well as information on activities run by local communities and organisations. Noticeboards are provided for the benefit of the community and are unable to display commercial marketing and party political campaigning materials.

Oxford City Council has over the past few years enabled 75 community noticeboards to be set up across the city which are managed by, community groups, Tenant and Resident Associations, local residents and other local organisations.

Managing a community noticeboard is a voluntary function, whereby a group or individual agree to receive notices and update these within community noticeboards on at least a fortnightly basis.

That 75 noticeboards across the city are managed by community groups and individuals is an excellent example of encouraging volunteering and community engagement, with several noticeboard managers playing active roles in other groups within communities also. The noticeboard managers provide a valuable service to their local communities and are supported through the Communities and Neighbourhoods team.

The local management arrangements have worked well in that the boards are best managed by local groups or individuals without

any political or commercial affiliations that may affect the perception of neutrality.

The Communities and Neighbourhoods Team do not provide noticeboard keys to councillors in the interests of ensuring that community noticeboards are, and can be perceived by others to be, politically neutral. There have been questions previously from local residents when councillors have put themselves forward to be keyholders e.g. at the North East Area Committee.

With regards to how far away the manager lives from a community noticeboard, this relates to a specific issue which has recently been resolved. The resident lives approximately 1.5 miles from the noticeboards' location but visits the area at least once per fortnight and agreed to update the board based on this frequency and their correspondence address was updated on the website to receive postal notices. An agreement with local shops that notices could be dropped off makes it more convenient for those wishing to display notices but not willing to post them as per the standard practice.

We have not been made aware of any other issues experienced by residents in the existing or new process of how this board is managed and updated.

We also have had very few negative comments about the noticeboards that we have established and see this as a positive community initiative to encourage and develop participation and engagement of residents in their local communities. It is also very positive in terms of volunteering across the City that we have such a dedicated and reliable group of volunteers.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member accepted that it was not appropriate for a community to have to wait two weeks for a notice to be displayed.

In response Councillor Curran said that they were community notice boards and not party political instruments. When you involved the community you had to accept that sometimes things did not move as fast as you may have wished.

(7) Question to the Board Member, Young People, Education and Community Development (Councillor Steven Curran) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Social Exclusion funding

The Council set a budget in February with £50,000 allocated for 'Social Exclusion'. There is still no information on how this money can be accessed – can we deduce that the administration gives social exclusion a very low priority?

Response: The Social Inclusion fund will be available to Members to submit projects to and the criteria will be available by the end of December.

There has been a lot of discussion around the criteria and so we wanted to make sure that we were not duplicating with the open grants bidding process and also linking with other new initiatives e.g. youth ambition.

The money will also be available for 2 years, so there can be many projects and initiatives taken forward.

There has been a huge amount of work related to social inclusion throughout Oxford City Council including major programmes addressing educational attainment, youth ambition, regeneration partnerships and development of local work clubs in the most deprived areas of the City.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked why this had not been discussed before.

In response Councillor Curran said that negotiations had been underway with many people to ensure that the funding was spent effectively.

(8) Question to the Board Member, Young People, Education and Community Development (Councillor Steven Curran) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Youth activities funding

The February budget allocated £240,000 per year for four years to support Youth activities. When will groups and councillors be able to apply for support from this fund?

Response: At September's City executive Board it was agreed that the youth ambition money would be invested into additional Positive Futures Sessions grants and to support match funding bids. The £50,000 grant allocation is now being promoted.

An update report on the youth ambition programme will be sent to all Members which includes details of how voluntary and community organisations can apply for the youth ambition grants.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member was disappointed with the situation.

In response Councillor Curran said that Councillor Fooks should look at the reasons why the funding was put into the budget which was because of cuts in the County Council budget. He added that we needed to ensure that we worked with other bodies to provide a service etc. to the areas that were no longer covered by the County Council.

(9) Question to the Board Member, Parks and Sports (Councillor Mark Lygo) from Councillor David Williams

Fighting Ash Tree Disease

The deadly fungal dieback disease Chalara Fraxinea has already destroyed 100,000 Ash trees in the UK and is rapidly approaching Oxfordshire. By now, as there were confirmed cases in neighbouring Buckinghamshire in October, the disease could have arrived in Oxfordshire.

Could the Portfolio holder give an assurance that the City Council is working with the relevant Government agencies, the Forestry Commission and Oxford County Council on a range of measures to seek to preserve the native Ash Trees that have always been an important part of Oxfordshire woodland.

Could he give a short outline of the efforts that are being made locally to combat the spread of the disease?

Would he agree that this is not the time to be making cut backs on disease research at the Forestry Commission (£10m to £7m) and would he press for the Tree Science Team which had been dissolved by the Government in 2011 to be reconstituted?

Could the Portfolio holder confirm that Oxford City Council has become a member of ASHTAG the local authority disease identification network and that movement of infected felled wood has not been authorised?

Response: The Council's Head of Leisure and Parks sent an update to all members on Chalara Fraxinea on 22nd November. I have attached the briefing note below which details our approach. I can confirm that as part of our monitoring, officers have joined the Ashtag group and continue to liaise with partners such as the County Council.

The spread of the tree fungal disease Chalara Fraxinea, commonly know as the Ash Dieback is continuing. The disease is reported to have killed 90% of Denmark's ash trees and ash is the third most common tree species in Britain. Chalara causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees, and usually leads to tree death.

Defra are attempting to mobilise the general public and focus attention on trees that show resistance to the disease as part of an action plan announced by Environment Secretary Owen Paterson.

The immediate plan of action was agreed at the Government's emergency committee which is to:

- reduce the rate of spread of the disease
- develop resistance to the disease in the native UK ash tree population
- encourage citizen, landowner and industry engagement and action in tackling the problem; and

- build resilience in the UK woodland and associated industries.

Mr Paterson set out an immediate plan of action to meet those objectives, building on the ideas discussed at the Chalara and Tree Health Summit on Wednesday 7 November. The advice of stakeholders, scientists and other experts is:

- Newly-planted diseased trees and diseased trees in nurseries will be traced and destroyed, as once young trees are infected they succumb quickly.
- Mature trees will not currently be removed, as they are valuable to wildlife, take longer to die and can help us learn more about genetic strains that might be resistant to the disease. Infection does not occur directly from tree to tree.
- Better understanding of the disease will be built through research and surveys, which will look not only for diseased trees but for those that show signs of genetic resistance to Chalara, to help identify genetic strains resistant to the disease.
- Foresters, land managers, environment groups and the general public will be informed about how to identify diseased trees and those likely to be resistant to the disease, and know what to do if they find a diseased tree.

Where infection is found in mature trees, the scientific advice is to leave them where they are as infection does not spread directly between trees, but only via the leaf litter.

The scientific advice is that it won't be possible to eradicate this disease now that we have discovered it in mature trees in Great Britain. However, that does not necessarily mean the end of the British ash. If we can slow its spread and minimise its impact, we will gain time to find those trees with genetic resistance to the disease and to restructure our woodlands to make them more resilient.

Details of the plan of action are available at www.defra.gov.uk/news/2012/11/09/wms-ash/

Locally we are following the Defra advice and closely monitoring the spread of this disease. We are continuing to monitor our stock, which consists of approximately 10% Ash, and discussions have already taken place with our green space partners in the city.

Councillor Williams in a supplementary question said that he was satisfied that the Council was doing all that it could and asked if the Board Member would agree that it had been a great pity that the Government had axed the Research Arboricultural Group and had reduced the Forestry Commissions budget by £27m.

In response Councillor Lygo said that he agreed with the comments made by Councillor Williams.

(10) Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bob Price from Councillor Dick Wolff

Local Authority Co-operative Network

At the 16th July meeting of Full Council the following amended motion was agreed by general assent:

'This Council resolves to investigate becoming a member of the Local Authority Co-operative Network and to that end asks the Chief Executive to prepare a report to the City Executive Board in the Autumn illustrating the advantages that may accrue from membership in terms of a range of policies especially in the area of economic development, the creation of local co-operatives and housing trusts.'

This Council, moreover, is determined to assist Oxford in becoming a city of co-operatives. To that end, it considers that, alongside investigating membership of the Local Authority Co-operative Network, it is a matter of priority to consider how the Council can support and promote co-operatives and requests that officers and Community and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee investigate all possible means to develop and embed co-operatives further in the fabric of our City's life.'

As we are now near the end of the UN International Year of Cooperatives, could the Leader tell us what progress has been made in (a) exploring membership of the Local Authority Cooperative Network and (b) investigating means for developing and embedding co-operatives further in the fabric of Oxford life?

Response: There has not yet been an officer report on this topic to the City Executive Board nor have the Members of the Communities and Partnership prioritised this into their work programme. However, the Council has continued to take practical steps to ensure best value in the widest sense, and to work with social enterprises and not for profit organisations such as the Low Carbon Hub, Groundwork, the Guardian Charity Award winning Aspire, and Fusion Lifestyles. The City Executive Board has also taken account of the potential to weigh social value in awarding contracts in our review of the Council's Procurement Strategy earlier this month. A report of the opportunities offered through cooperative ventures will be commissioned in the New Year.

Councillor Wolff in supplementary question asked if the Leader of the Council would agree if the Co-operative would use its resources more effectively if it sponsored a Green politician rather than a Labour one.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Price) made no comment.

(11) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Jean Fooks

Governance Review Group meetings

When will the promised next meeting of the Governance Review group take place? Can Council be assured that there will be proper consultation with all members on any proposed changes to the way the Council operates?

Response: The Governance Review is being undertaken by a cross party group of Members. Each Group has nominated two Members each. The first meeting took place in October 2012 and since then Officers have been working up a number of strands of work as agreed by Members at that first meeting. The whole purpose of having representatives from each political group was to ensure that Members, through their groups, were able to have direct influence over the proposals which emerged. A second meeting will be convened shortly.

Councillor Fooks in a supplementary question asked why the meeting had not been convened and what was the timescale.

In response Councillor Turner said that a meeting would take place shortly and that when the Group reached a conclusion it would consult with all Councillors with an aim to having any new decision making structures in place for Annual Council in 2013.

(12) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor John Goddard

City Deal Proposals

How does the Leader propose to ensure that in the City Deal proposals to be submitted to the Coalition Government by 15 January the governance arrangements will promote, not thwart, the needs and legitimate aspirations of the City for homes, jobs and respect for the environment?

Response: City Deals are designed to embrace the functional economic area within which the city is located. The City Council has been engaged in intensive discussions with the other Oxfordshire Councils, and the Local Enterprise Partnership, in order to be able to bring forward an agreed Expression of Interest by the middle of January. The City's existing planning policies and the draft economic development strategy have provided the basis for our engagement in this process and we are hoping that the EOI will reflect the interests of all the parties to combine economic growth, improved transport and housing infrastructure, and an outstanding natural environment.

Councillor Goddard in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would ensure that many more homes close to Oxford were included.

In response Councillor Turner said that Officers and Councillors would do all that they could to achieve this.

(b) **Questions notified by the deadline in the Constitution where no reply in advance of the meeting was given**

(13) **Question to the Board Member, City Development (Councillor Colin Cook) from Councillor Graham Jones**

Oxford Rail Station

Will the appropriate Executive Member bring us up to date on the working party discussions to produce a plan for Oxford's railway station?

Response: A public meeting had already been arranged for 6.30pm on 9th January 2013 in the town Hall at which Network Rail would talk about this proposal and others along the rail corridor through Oxford.

A briefing especially for Members was also proposed at 5.00pm on the same day and details have been circulated.

Councillor Jones in a supplementary question asked if we could hope that a building that was iconic rather than utilitarian was built.

In response Councillor Cook said that he would press for this, but that this was already part of planning policies.

(14) **Question to the Board Member Parks and Sports (Councillor Mark Lygo) from Councillor Graham Jones**

Manzil Way Gardens

Topsoil has been spread on the large part of Manzil Way Gardens given over to construction work for the best part of two years. Will the Executive Member responsible say how it is planned to return this open space to public use?

Response: The land had to be returned to the Council in the same condition as it was before the development. The delay in this work had been due to the recent bad weather.

Councillor Jones in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would agree that it was a good time to look at the area as a whole and to come up with a scheme.

In response Councillor Lygo said that he would work with Parks and the local community on the reinstatement of the area.

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

Recycling targets

It is widely expected that the Administration will miss its target of 50% domestic recycling by the end of this council year. Will the

Executive Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford say what he plans to do to hit the target in 2013/14?

Response: It is likely that this year's waste recycling result will fall a little short of 50%, but is almost certain to improve on last year's outcome.

In order to improve this result in 2013/14, the work that is just being completed on converting Council flat sites to recycling will have a full year's impact. In addition, further waste items have been added to the materials which we can recycle, most recently mattresses and batteries.

This month's City Executive Board approved a report to change the waste policy for sites with communal bin storage and Houses in Multiple Occupation, which should bring about incremental improvements from January 2014.

Hitting the 50% target will always be a challenge for an urban local authority, particularly one with a transient student population and ongoing education campaigns are essential to maintain customer awareness.

Whilst the recycling percentage is slightly behind target, members should celebrate the fact that the amount of waste sent to landfill per household continues to be less than (better than) the target and is the lowest in Oxfordshire."

Councillor Jones in a supplementary question asked if the Board Member would take a look at the scheme at Swansea City Council "£1 a Throw" where items that were repairable/reusable were sold.

In response Councillor Tanner agreed to take this suggestion to the Waste Partnership.

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

Budget consultation

Why were the press given access to the Administration's consultation budget the day before, apparently about 30 hours before, everyone else apart from the administration itself?

Response: The press did not see the final version. A press briefing was arranged as it had been assumed that the information had been released.

Councillor Fooks in s supplementary question asked if the Board Member could explain why the press had asked her for comments.

In response Councillor Turner said that Members should be concerned about what the budget could achieve rather than the process and any briefings of the press.

(17) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Graham Jones

Police and Crime Panel - Feedback

Doubtless the Leader shares concern that turnout for the Police and Crime Commissioner election was barely 2% in one Oxford polling station and 10% overall. Will he say how he and/or the city's representative on the Police and Crime Panel will report back to this council and the public about the panel's work of holding the new commissioner and his staff to account?

Response: I agree that the turnout was low. Buckinghamshire County Council will be the host local authority for the Panel although meetings will take place across the Thames Valley Police area. The meeting in July 2013 will be held in Oxford. I encourage groups to send their representatives to the monthly meetings with Officers, plus I am happy to attend the City Council Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis to provide updates. There are also links from the City Council's website to the Buckinghamshire County Council website.

Councillor Jones in a supplementary question said that it was often the case that partnership links were out of date and would the Board Member ensure that they were kept up to date.

In response Councillor Sinclair agreed to do this.

(18) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor James Fry

Sustrans – Oxford Canal Towpath improvements

I am sure that all of us on the Council support the work by Sustrans to extend the cycle network in the City, including the proposed upgrading of the Oxford Canal towpath northwards from Walton Well Road to Elizabeth Jennings Way. It is shocking to learn that, because some sections of the extension would be restricted to 1.8 metres in width (rather than the desired minimum width of 2.0 metres) to accommodate water voles, Sustrans is stating that it will withdraw its financial support from the project.

Would the Leader of the Council convey to Sustrans our deep distress at its statement and ask it to reconsider this decision very urgently for the benefit of the large number of cyclists and other users of the towpath.

A written response was provided as follows after the meeting.

I share Councillor Fry's distress at this short sighted decision. Colleagues in City Development are seeking to find a mediated solution in discussion with Sustrans, so that this important extension to the cycle network can proceed as planned.

(19) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Sam Hollick

Ethical Care Charter

UNISON are calling on councils to sign up to their ethical care charter for the commissioning of home care services. This charter seeks to strengthen minimum standards of care through protecting and improving the working conditions of care workers.

While noting that this council does not directly commission care services, what is this council doing to improve standards of care and working conditions for carers in Oxford? And will we be signing the charter?

A written response was provided as follows after the meeting.

Since the City Council does not employ care workers, it would be inappropriate for us to sign up to the charter, but the Council would strongly endorse the UNISON case for improving the conditions of employment for care workers. The City Council's Living Wage policy seeks to establish a minimum pay level for workers in the city through the influence that we can exert through our contracts with suppliers and we hope that this will have some influence in the care sector as well. The Council also works closely with Age Concern UK to tackle the problems of isolation among elderly people and we will seek to use that partnership to encourage improvements in the conditions of employment of care workers.

(20) Question to the Leader of Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Tony Brett

Your Oxford – re-print

Would the leader assure council that he properly understands the proposed Universal Credit system and that Child Benefit is not included in it. Will he further give a detailed breakdown of how much his previous ignorance cost Oxford's taxpayers including reprinting 65,000 copies of four pages of the current "Your Oxford", staff costs for re-drafting and re-assembling the document, legal staff costs of checking the re-drafting, delivery costs and any other costs the council incurred including reassuring worried residents, removing erroneous copies from Libraries and other public buildings and other media and communications costs? Will he give an indication as to when all Oxford Residents might expect to receive the corrected copies?

A written response was provided as follows after the meeting.

The cost of the reprinting process was £6.8k. There were no costs involved in reassuring worried residents, as no worries were expressed. The delivery process was completed during the past week.

Councillor Brett at the reconvened Council meeting on 31st January 2013 asked a supplementary question asked what had the Council learned from the Housing Benefit pilot and what support would the Council be giving to families to help them manage their money.

In response Councillor Price said that all Members would be receiving a report on the pilot scheme and the support available. He said that three lessons had been learnt:

- (1) the proportion of people who could not reasonably be expected to handle their own affairs and fall into arrears was relatively small;
- (2) There was a significant amount of work to be undertaken by Officer to support those families, to encourage them to manage their budget and to move into employment;
- (3) The long term impact of the changes, in particular the Bedroom Tax where the changes in family circumstances would be difficult to map.

He concluded that further discussions were taking place and the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee would continue to monitor the progress of the pilot.

(21) Question to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Price) from Councillor Graham Jones

Improving ESOL provision in Oxford

Very nearly 30% of Oxford people were born outside the UK according to the newly released Census figures. Will the Executive Member responsible please say how the Administration plans to ensure that this council does its part in improving English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in Oxford?

A written response was provided as follows after the meeting.

The OCVA have produced an excellent report on this subject, which was presented to the Oxford Strategic Partnership at its last two meetings. The report makes recommendations for the City Council and for other bodies designed to improve ESOL provision and we will be seeking to implement them over the next year.

Councillor Jones at the reconvened Council meeting on 31st January 2013 asked a supplementary question wished to draw to Councillor Price's attention the latest information that showed that Oxford's population growth over the past decade had been entirely down to residents who had arrived from overseas.

Councillor Jones asked if Councillor Price agreed that the most cost effective way to optimise this wonderful resource and enhance

community cohesion was the teaching of these language skills. He asked if Councillor Price would take a particular interest in supporting the revival of ladies only classes which were popular with ladies from the Indian sub-continent, but were no longer available.

In response Councillor Price thanked Councillor Jones for raising the issue. Language teaching needed to rise up the agenda. He had spoken with colleagues in the Student Hub whose volunteer numbers were increasing and there was a potential to use this resource as part of a structured campaign over a number of years to support language teaching. He said that under the Oxford Strategic Partnership, it was being looked at how best to knit together the various initiatives including the Council's own education initiative, the work of the Hub and various charitable organisations in the City, so that by the end of the current calendar year, a structured programme would be in place. This would allow for better training and support for the migrant groups in Oxford.

90. STATEMENTS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

No Statements on Notice had been submitted.

With the consent of Council, the Lord Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9.40 pm to be reconvened at a future date to allow for the remaining business on the agenda to be completed.

91. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Council agreed to defer this item to the reconvened meeting of Council in January 2013 (Minute 94 refers).

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

Council agreed to defer this item to the reconvened meeting of Council in January 2013 (Minute 95 refers).

Reconvened Council Meeting - Thursday 31st January 2013

Following a request to the Lord Mayor from Councillor Brett, the Lord Mayor asked Council if it agreed to revisit agenda item 18 (Questions on Notice from Members of Council). This was to allow supplementary questions to be asked by Councillors Brett and Jones on the written responses given by Councillor Price.

Council voted and agreed to revisit agenda item 18 (Questions on Notice from Members of Council) (Minute 89 refers).

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - 31ST JANUARY 2013

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anne-Marie Canning, James Fry, John Goddard, Michael Gotch, Shah Jahan Khan, Oscar Van Nooijen, Gwynneth Royce, Ben Lloyd Shogbesan, Val Smith, Ed Turner and Ruth Wilkinson.

94. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Council had before it 19 Motions on Notice and reached decisions as follows:

(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" targeting 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.

Councillor Dick Wolff moved an amendment as follows and with the agreement of Council then withdrew the proposed amendment.

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.”

Councillor Mike Rowley seconded by Councillor Dick Wolff moved an amendment as follows:

To add a new point 4 as follows:

- (4) *This Council commends the work of Credit Unions and especially Oxford Credit Union and Blackbird Leys Credit Union, which fill an invaluable role in helping people in our City avoid falling into the clutches of loan sharks.*

To add a point (d) to the original point (4) which now becomes point (5) as follows:

- (d) *To continue to work closely with local Credit Union and regularly review whether there are any further ways in which the Council can support their current work and/or plans for expansion.*

To amend point (5)(c) to read as follows:

- (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, and into any money advice provide by independent bodies in receipt of funding from the Council.*

The mover of the substantive Motion, Councillor Mike Rowley accepted the amendment and following a debate Council voted and the amended Motion was adopted as follows:

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" targeting pensioners and students to be particularly irresponsible.
4. This Council commends the work of Credit Unions and especially Oxford Credit Union and Blackbird Leys Credit Union, which fill an invaluable role in helping people in our City avoid falling into the clutches of loan sharks.
5. 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, and into any money advice provided by independent bodies in receipt of funding from the Council;
- (d) to continue to work closely with local Credit Unions and regularly review whether there are any further ways in which the Council can support their current work and/or plans for expansion.

(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”

Councillor Dick Wolff seconded by Councillor Elise Benjamin moved an amendment 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.

Councillor Craig Simmons moved an amendment as follows and with the agreement of Council then withdrew the proposed amendment.

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.

Councillor Mark Mills seconded by Councillor Jean Fooks moved an amendment 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 mover of the substantive Motion, Councillor Van Coulter did not accept the amendments by from Councillors Dick Wolff and Councillor Mark Mills. Following a debate, Council voted and the substantive Motion was adopted.

(3) Day Centre Charges – (Proposer Councillor Gill Sanders, seconder Councillor Bob Price)

Councillor Rae Humberstone declared a pecuniary interest as he was an employee of the Oxfordshire County Council and left the room before the Motion on Notice was presented, debated and voted upon.

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.

Councillor Gill Sanders seconded by Councillor Price moved an amendment to her own Motion on Notice to delete the whole of the final paragraph.

Following a debated, Council voted and the amended Motion was adopted as follows:

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.

(4) Destabilisation of University finances – (Proposer Councillor Bob Price seconder Councillor Sajjad Malik)

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.

Councillor Jean Fooks seconded by Councillor Mark Mills moved an amendment as follows:

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 Mover of the substantive Motion did not accept the amendment. Following a debate, Council voted and the substantive Motion was adopted.

(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.

Councillor Dick Wolff moved an amendment 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.*

Councillor Roy Darke's Motion on Notice, nor was Councillor Dick Wolff's amendment considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Ed Turner's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Dick Wolff submitted an amendment as follows:

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

Councillor Laurence Baxter seconded by Councillor Mark Lygo, submitted an amendment to add an additional paragraph as follows:

"Council further believes that teachers - in Oxford and beyond - often go the extra mile for their pupils, and believes that, especially when much is asked of teachers (as it will be in raising standards in Oxford's schools), it is essential to treat their profession with fairness and respect. Council therefore regrets the threatening approach taken by the Secretary of State for Education towards teachers engaging in a legitimate "work to rule", and further attempts to erode teachers' job security at Academies. Council also opposes a localised "free for all" on teachers' pay, which will see radically divergent amounts being paid for the same work in different schools, will lead to more friction between schoolteachers and managers, will promote "poaching" and other unhealthy industrial practices, and represents yet another attack on fairness in the labour market by the Tory / Lib Dem government"

Councillor Fooks Motion on Notice and Councillors Wolff's and Baxter's amendments were not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Graham Jones Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor David William's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Bob Price submitted an amendment 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 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.

Councillor Sam Hollick submitted an amendment to his own Motion on Notice 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 ratio of minimum to maximum pay (1:7 in 2012). Council commits to setting the current ratio of 1:7 as a maximum in future pay negotiations.

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

Councillor Sam Hollicks Motion on Notice and his amendment and Councillor Price's amendment were considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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?

Councillor David Williams submitted an amendment to his Motion on Notice, to include a new second paragraph as follows:

The recently published European Food Safety Authority report that concludes that there is a clear link between falling bee populations and the use of neonicotinoides adds even more scientific evidence that these chemicals should be band.

Councillor Williams Motion on Notice and his amendment were not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Hollick's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Williams Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Benjamin's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.'

Councillor Tanner's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

**(16) Practicality 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.

Councillor Rowley's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Sanders Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Smith's Motion on Notice was not considered as the time allowed for Motions on Notice by the Constitution had lapsed.

(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.

Councillor Jean Fooks submitted an amendment as follows:

Insert the word "coalition" in the second line before the word "Government".

Insert a new second paragraph to read "It welcomes the establishment of a new legislative framework to deliver secure, affordable and low carbon energy, and the availability of the £110 billion investment needed to replace current generating capacity and upgrade the national grid by 2020. Council notes the Government will triple the support available for electricity generation from renewables, nuclear and carbon capture and storage.

Delete the following words in the original second paragraph "making a decision about" and insert the following new words "a decarbonisation target" after the word "setting".

Add the following words to the original third paragraph "risks" in the first line after the word "This" and the words "increase energy efficiency to reduce demand" in the second line after the word "to".

Delete the whole of the original fourth paragraph.

Insert a new sixth paragraph to read " Council is concerned at the immediate impact of rising energy process while noting that Government expects that average household bills will be 7% or £94 lower by 2020".

Delete the words "Climate risk requires action now" in the original seventh paragraph and insert a new seventh paragraph to read "Council reaffirms its wish to be a lead authority in tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions. It resolves to do all it can to improve the energy efficiency of its own property and to assist home-owners and private tenants to reduce their energy usage and costs with advice and grants, including taking advantage of the Green Deal proposals.

Amend the final paragraph to read "Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Local MP's and the Prime Minister expressing Councils concern at the omission of a decarbonisation target from the energy Bill, putting at risk the Government's claim to be the greenest Government ever. Delete the words "and Council requests that the Leaders of all political groups within Oxford City Council co sign the letter to express out united concerns to the Prime Minister.

Councillor Coulter's Motion on Notice and Councillor Fook's amendment were not considered as the time allowed by the Constitution for Motions on Notice had lapsed.

**95. REPORTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT ORGANISATIONS THE
COUNCIL IS REPRESENTED ON**

No questions were asked.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 9.40 pm

Surviving Winter Campaign 2012

I am Jayne Woodley, Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Community Foundation, here to address you this afternoon about our Surviving Winter Appeal.

Surviving Winter is a UK-wide co-ordinated campaign that was inspired by people who wanted to recycle their Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) to support older and vulnerable people survive winter. However, it aims to encourage anyone to make a donation to help those affected by fuel poverty.

In Oxfordshire, we are hoping that this innovative giving will continue to gather momentum so that once again we can help the most vulnerable survive winter.

The Oxfordshire Community Foundation are also collaborating with the Warm Homes Healthy People (Oxfordshire) initiative which has introduced a further £25k to our Appeal so that we already have available funds to help a significant number of local people.

Every year people die needlessly and become an Excess Winter death or fuel poverty statistic. Last year across Oxfordshire more than 360 individuals fell into this category. However, the Oxfordshire Community Foundation believes there is something that all of us here in this room today can do to help change that and quite literally save lives.

Together we could show that the people of Oxford City really do care and know how to be 'Good Neighbours'. Something I already believe to be true.

As nearly every day since the middle of November once again we have been receiving cheques in the post and online donations, and it is both humbling and heart-warming to witness generous local residents rally to help their vulnerable neighbours. To date we have raised nearly £12,000.

Assuring our donors that their money is being used in the best and most effective way is vital and when we launched our appeal again this year we published an impact report [Heat or Eat?](#) This little booklet shows how the Oxfordshire Community Foundation has been successfully distributing the money raised from donations to our Surviving Winter Appeal.

I have brought copies of this little booklet here with me today, but it is also available online so I do hope that you will be inspired to forward it onto anyone else who you think might be interested and would like to add their support.

Collaboration and working in partnership is something the Oxfordshire Community Foundation is absolutely passionate about and for our Surviving Winter Appeal this year we are delighted to be working with a number of other community organisations:

Warm Homes Healthy People (Oxfordshire)

Link Up (West Oxfordshire)

22 Good Neighbour Networks across Oxfordshire

Age UK

Independent Advice Centres

OCVA

Food Banks

Oxfordshire Sports Partnership and The English Table Tennis Association

Together they will help us deliver the following from our Surviving Winter Appeal:

To raise funds (through donations) to support local vulnerable people

To encourage volunteering / befriending

To help combat isolation and loneliness

To inspire new social activities and hobbies

As councillors, I believe it is important that you are aware of how the Oxfordshire Community Foundation could be helping the community groups and individuals that you know - as we will be distributing funds from our Surviving Winter donations directly to:

small volunteer-led community groups that are providing support and friendship to the elderly and vulnerable during the cold weather individuals via our partnership with Warm Homes Healthy People partnership

However, as councillors, you will also appreciate that there will always be so much we could be doing, so I am asking for your help today to:

Tell your families and friends about our Surviving Winter Appeal and encourage them to make a donation or pass on their Winter Fuel Allowance

Encourage them to [gift aid their donation](#) which will enhance their gift by 25%

Tell those in your communities either groups or individuals about the Oxfordshire Community Foundation and our Surviving Winter Grants.

Whilst we have 17 years of expertise and have supported more than 1500 local projects since 1995 we know there are many more on our doorstep that could benefit from our help as it is often the most vulnerable who remain under our radar.

So as we go into 2013, I believe you really can help us reach more local people by introducing us to those individuals or voluntary groups who we might otherwise find hard to reach.

And just to round off a few words on Get Batty

For many people winter can be especially lonely and challenging. When temperatures drop trips out are usually just for essential medical appointments or basic shopping and this exacerbates feelings of isolation & loneliness and leads to inactivity.

Get Batty will mix pleasure with the essentials and encourage an active and more sociable lifestyle for everyone and 'actively break down barriers' over a game of ping-pong. Table tennis has been an Olympic success proving that age is no barrier and is a safe and enjoyable way for older and disabled people to exercise and make new friends.

Oxfordshire Community Foundation are supplying table top ping-pong sets, containing bats, balls, and a net, which can fit onto any table, to volunteers and organisations who sign up for Get Batty. (We are delighted to be working with Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, Link Up, Good Neighbour Networks and other organisations including youth groups and schools to Get Batty operational across the county).

We hope that businesses that have volunteer programmes will encourage staff to use their volunteer hours for Get Batty and sign up to a Good Neighbour scheme. It is great that the Oxford City Council have become one of the first organisations to encourage their own staff to volunteer in this way:

So how can you help? Well there is only one of me but a room full of you and so I am asking you to share what you have heard today about our Surviving Winter Appeal:

Talk to your council colleagues, ask them if they have heard about Get Batty, ask them how they plan to use their volunteer hours

Talk to businesses and help the OCF spread the word about Get Batty. Please use my business cards and hand them out to businesses you meet, or better still introduce them to me if they would like their staff to Get Batty with us.

Lead by example – volunteer yourself and others for an Existing Good Neighbour Scheme

visit www.oxfordshire.org to pledge your support to help us put an end to the misery of winter and those unnecessary excess winter death statistics

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon, please don't forget ... I'm Jayne Woodley and I look forward to hearing from you very soon!

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Sushilla Dhall – Address to Council **Damage to Port Meadow**

I speak to you today because to date 1,650 signatures have been put to the petition entitled 'Port Meadow Damaged Views' which you will all have had an opportunity to read the wording of. You will, I hope, have read the comments on the petition, and seen the strength of local feeling about this issue.

For centuries Port Meadow has been a place of refuge and rest for the people of Oxford, accessible to everyone, from town, gown and far afield, from other cities, other countries and most of all locally. It has EU heritage status because of its uniquely beautiful and wildlife-protecting nature. It is deservedly greatly loved, being a large open meadow with views, until recently, of the Dreaming Spires, which could be seen, until recently, behind a row of mature trees. This year has seen the shameful destruction of that aspect of Port Meadow, so that now it can only be enjoyed if you walk or stand with your back to the entire south east corner. From Wolvercote to Oxford city, the view has this year been ruined by a blank row of barrack-like blocks, intended as student housing. In the evening the setting sun gleams on the horizontal row of rooftops which appears unbroken, and the much-loved view of the spire of St Barnabas can no longer be seen as the landmark of Jericho from Port Meadow.

It is clear that once these buildings are up and running the light pollution from them, which will be clearly visible across Port Meadow, is going to mean the impact of this carelessly approved development is devastating all day and all night, all year round.

Oxford City Council decided to give this bigger scheme planning permission on the back of an extant permission dating from the 1990s. As such, it was decided that there need be no Environmental Impact Assessment. The City Council decided that this was 'not a sensitive area and the impact could be mitigated.' With these few words miles of heritage was vandalised.

Responsibility needs to be taken. I'd like to know how many councillors have bothered to go and see what has been done in their name, and whether they are justly ashamed of it. It is bad enough to justify a revocation of planning permission. But in the short term, that Environmental Impact Assessment needs to happen. It should have happened before, and should happen now, partly to ensure a sense of real responsibility for this is taken, and partly to quantify the damage to the whole precious and now degraded area.

'Impact can be mitigated' was what was agreed by this Council in giving permission for this incredibly ugly development. How can this mitigation be done? The mature trees in front of the buildings barely cover the view. Even before the development was this high and when the trees in front of it had leaves, the buildings rose ugly and monotonous well above the treeline. How is this going to be mitigated? And I mean now, not in 30 years time and only in summer. How can the view of the spires be restored? Where is the plan to show in detail how mitigation of this dreadful mess can be achieved.?

Why did nobody know about this? Why did local councillors not tell local groups and people about it? I saw no sign on any lamppost, no article in any council or political newsletter, heard nothing at any local group meeting. As far as I can tell only Cripsey Meadow Allotment holders had any idea, and even they were not aware of the blight this would actually be. Why was there no proper consultation? Does this council know what consultation means? Does this council know that consultation means people need to know what is happening before they can comment?

The plans for this development show the 'view cone from Wolvercote' with a thin red line drawn below the treeline to indicate no damage to the view. This was treachery, designed to make it look as if there would be no impact to the view, and councillors are elected to protect us from this type of robbery. Of course the view, that is meant to be protected, has been enormously damaged.

From Wolvercote these buildings can be seen raising their ugly roofs to damage the view. From nearer and even from the other side of the river the view is destroyed. Please let the public know what you are going to do in the face of this miserable loss, of views, heritage, and of trust in you.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Facilities

The Labour Party was formed as the result of hard work by working people, trade unionists and socialists united by the goal of changing Parliament to represent the interests of EVERYBODY.

Why is it that this group of councillors go against these basic rules of their own party? Why is it that they want to rule this city with a rod of iron just as the Tories and wigs did prior to their formation way back in 1900?

This Labour group are intent on not only going against their own doctrines but also the first principles of "Freedom of Speech".

During the last meeting here I chose to address this organisation and during that address I was interrupted by a certain member not once but twice. I could have ignored it but due to that member being asked to refrain and failing to do so I felt intimidated by that individual. Can I ask the Labour leader to control his members when members of the public are addressing this austere group of officials after all said and done it's not as if they are not aware of the contents of our speeches as they are there in the council agenda and for such a group to behave in such a manor smacks of collusion from senior members of the group.

Recently the "Princes Foundation" held consultation meetings with residents on Blackbird Leys and from those meetings they have formulated a master plan which involves vast amounts of money being lavished on the deprived area of Blackbird Leys. In light of this would it not be more sensible and beneficial to divert the funding for the swimming pool to this venture after all said and done the people have spoken and rather than a brand new state of the art 25 metre swimming pool have opted for other facilities across Blackbird Leys as not all members of the public will want or be allowed to use it at the times they might wish to.

Also with this master plan I couldn't help but notice that housing is to be constructed on the park to the east of the college facilities, if allowed to precede this will remove three football pitches so where will they go and play? It will also have a greater impact on the drainage from the site increasing the risk to the existing residents and it goes without saying the infrastructure will not be able to cope with this sort of development. During the heavy rainfall in November and early December I wandered over to the park and noticed all though it was extremely soggy the grassed area did manage to cope with the deluge but additional construction on this site will have a major impact on the ability to handle such downpours again.

I might add this is only if we are unsuccessful with our town green application which is **still ongoing**.

So the questions I have for you are:

- 1) Is it your intention to adopt the findings of the Princes Foundation in full and without further recourse to the residents of Blackbird Leys?
- 2) What is the long term objective for the Oxford Stadium site now you have successfully closed it? I refer to my last speech October 2012.

- 3) Is it your intention to upgrade the infrastructure for both the leisure centre and stadium sites and if yes will the public be involved with any additional measures you wish to put in place?
- 4) What is the envisaged time scale of all construction on Blackbird Leys?

Christmas is coming so why don't you give us all an early present and allow us to retain the amenities we have. It's never too late to do the right thing do it now while you can and not when you have to following judicial reviews and that will also save the tax payer money.

You have dared to poke a stick in to the nest of extremely angry residents and give it a good old stir so don't be surprised when they turn round and bite you. The storm is rising the residents of Blackbird Leys will have their say and will attend this place to voice their opinions. What you don't want is for all the Blackbird Leys action groups combining that could be, even for this labour group, just a little bit too much to handle but you are forcing their hands at every turn so who knows what the next meeting in this place will resemble!

It's your choice but for Blackbird Leys make it quick.

Nuala Young- Address to Full Council Dec.17th. 2012

It is with great reluctance that I have decided to come back to address this Council. In my years as councillor I came to realise that councillors of the ruling party were not interested in open debate, but would come to the Council meetings with their minds already made up and no room for reconsideration of issues in response to new information or ideas. Indeed when I asked Councillor Price if he was sorry that so few of his councillors contributed to the debates, he told me that he was glad of it and hoped it would stay like that.

However I don't think we should accept this type of autocracy. Our culture is based on the idea of debate and it is only in the last century that party politicians have been frightened by our media corporations from showing any disagreement or daring to have any open debate.

It is not surprising that people have insisted on keeping open the debate on the Council's proposal to demolish a local and much needed pool in order to partly fund a new pool in a less central location that will be no bigger and actually have fewer facilities.

Policy SR 15 of the Oxford Local Plan. States that

“Planning permission will not be granted for development that would result in the loss of community facilities where there is a need for the facility to be retained in its current location.”

There is a good reason for this. People need their facilities to be nearby.

‘Accessible’ means via walking, cycling, numerous bus routes. Temple Cowley Pools is accessible to a number of surrounding communities, among them the wards of St. Clements, St. Marys, Lye Valley, Rose Hill, Florence Park.

Apparently the Council's lawyers are claiming that the pool on the edge of Blackbird Leys is “local”. I think common sense tells us that this is stretching the meaning of “local” to make it almost meaningless. This is a piece of sophistry and , not necessarily a legally sound position. It is quite obvious to anyone who is standing outside Temple Cowley that a lot of people do access the pool on foot and by bike. Children from three schools walk to it. It is truly local in a way that a Blackbird Leys Pool will not be for the present users.

Councillor Clarkson in urging us in a past Council meeting to accept the new pool, has suggested that it will be easier for people to drive there . Surely this is not the intelligent way to be planning our community facilities. For reasons of climate change we really should be looking at how to cut car use in our city.

A government report has concluded that a third of our schoolchildren around the ages of 10 and 11 are overweight and unfit. We should be encouraging

them to use the swimming facility and, ideally, to walk or cycle to it. In a city of 2 rivers we need to encourage all our children to learn to swim. There is a need for the facility to be retained in its present position.

Children whose parents cannot afford to send them to private schools, can no longer afford a car or hefty bus fares, still deserve to be able to go to a local pool to learn to swim and enjoy the fun of diving and other water sports.

It is time to rethink. It is important that the other parties on the Council agree not to look negatively on such a rethink and applaud the ruling group for having the strength and intelligence to look at this whole matter again.

Nuala Young Dec. 17th. 2012

Recycling in Oxford and Carbon emission reduction.

My first conversation about recycling with Councillor John Tanner was over 20 years ago when I asked why we didn't have recycling here in Oxford. His reply was "It would have to come from central government, Oxford's Labour council could not do it on their own". I went home and started a recycling in my area of Headington setting up my home as a collection point for newspapers and aluminium once a month which was then collected by Friends of the Earth. It worked well for a number of years and eventually the council put their own collection bins at shopping areas.

The city council now requires everyone to recycle (which is great although not always understood or acted on by some residents who simply put out all waste in blue one week and all waste in green the next overflowing into the street!) but do not insist on recycling on their own premises such as at the swimming pools and leisure centres.

When I found out about this over eight years ago I took blue recycling boxes to my local centre and would empty them two or three times a week and recycle the contents. After some years they told me that they now did the recycling themselves and I stopped.

However, they did not offer separate bins which customers prefer as we are all used to separating our waste, but told me that their own, at that time council-employed, staff separated the materials themselves into the large recycling bins outside.

I did continue to leave a small blue box in the women's changing rooms so that we could leave our empty shampoo bottles etc. This has been popular and I assume, saves staff time and the less pleasant task of separating items. Last month I found that the blue box in the women's changing area had been removed. When I asked the acting manager, Stuart, why this was, he told me that they did NOT do recycling there. When I asked why and when this had stopped he told me that they have NEVER recycled at that centre. This is totally unacceptable behaviour by the City Council.

All that posturing about caring about carbon emissions by John Tanner yet the City Council won't even act on their requirements.

Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre also has the only pools in the city which are not fully covered with rigid covers when not in use which would save all of us, up to 80% of heat loss (and loss of evaporated pool chemicals). Pool covers would save maintenance costs on air conditioning recoup through energy savings the financial cost of covers within one year of purchase!!! I first pointed this out when the TCP facility opened in 1987 and again three years ago but the short-sightedness of the city council has meant that our money continues to be wasted.

What a waste! I call on Oxford City Council to do the right thing and insist that recycling is properly carried out on all their premises.

Jane Alexander

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