

## XX. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

### (1) **Winter fuel poverty** – (Proposer Councillor Anne-Marie Canning, seconder Councillor Van Coulter)

The Council notes:

1. Already 1 in 4 households in the UK are in fuel poverty, meaning they need to spend more than 10% of their income on keeping their homes warm. Average bills over £1,247 per annum. The problem is likely to get worse, with 1 in 3 households projected to be in fuel poverty by 2016. Council notes that this will affect thousands of households in Oxford.
2. The main reasons for this crisis are that gas, oil and coal prices are high, and the UK's homes are some of the most energy inefficient in Europe – leaking heat from their doors, walls and windows.
3. Cold homes are damaging the health of vulnerable members of society, including children, older people and people with disabilities. Diseases such as asthma are made worse, and people are more likely to have strokes and heart attacks. Illnesses caused by cold homes cost the NHS nearly one billion pounds each year.
4. Over the next 15 years the Government will raise an average of £4 billion every year in carbon taxes through the European Emissions Trading Scheme and the Carbon Floor Price. Recycling this revenue back into households could bring 9 out of 10 homes out of fuel poverty, lower people's bills, cut carbon emissions and create jobs.

The Council therefore resolves to:

1. Council encourages the City Executive Board to focus upon reducing fuel poverty in Oxford by any means possible and to develop fuel poverty action plan.
2. Support the Energy Bill Revolution campaign calling for the Government to recycle revenues from carbon taxes into improving the energy efficiency of UK homes.

### (2) **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 .

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.

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?

**(3) 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.

**(4) 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.

(5) **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.

(6) **Setting a carbon target – (Proposer Councillor Van Coulter, seconder Councillor Jean Fooks)**

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

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 that Government will triple the support available for electricity generation from renewables, nuclear and carbon capture and storage.

However, Council regrets that the Government has decided to defer setting a decarbonisation target until after the next general election.

This risks distracting focus from the pressing need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and for the urgent need to increase energy efficiency to reduce demand.

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.

Council is concerned at the immediate impact of rising energy prices while noting that Government expects that average household bills will be 7% or £94 lower by 2020.

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.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the local MP's and the Prime Minister expressing Council's 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.

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