

## 17. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

### (1) **Council Tax Benefit** – (Proposer – Councillor Ed Turner)

Council notes with regret and alarm the consultation on cuts to council tax benefit. Council believes that the cut - which will amount to nearly 20% in the council tax benefit of working-age recipients - represents an appalling indifference to the plight of people on low incomes (including many disabled people and those with children) and will be damaging to the aim of reducing child poverty, in Oxford and elsewhere.

Council expresses concern that local authorities are being incentivised to reduce benefits and spend funding elsewhere, and believes this could lead to a highly damaging 'race to the bottom' in levels of provision. Council also expresses concern at the significant expense likely to be associated in chasing small amounts of money from those on low incomes, and at the significant extra complexity which will be introduced into the benefits system at a time when simplification is the government's stated aim.

Council notes that in the past politicians have expressed concern at a perceived unfairness in the council tax system, and finds it an act of gross political hypocrisy that these same politicians are now massively increasing the council tax burden upon the very poorest in our society.

Council asks the Chief Executive to draft a strongly-worded letter to Ministers on this subject, to be signed by himself and any group leaders who are willing.

### (2) **Universal Credit Delivery Arrangements** – (Proposer – Councillor Ed Turner)

Council notes that the Government has indicated that benefits for those of working age are to be merged into the Universal Credit. Council expresses concern that this is associated with enormous reductions in the DWP's overall budget, meaning the transition is likely to exacerbate poverty. Council further expresses concern that administration of the new combined benefit may be entirely with the DWP, and will not offer vulnerable claimants the personal service that they receive from Oxford City Council and other local authorities. Council believes it is unacceptable to expect vulnerable claimants to rely on the internet and telephone alone to make claims, and that the proposed transitional arrangements, with two systems operating in parallel, run a great risk of becoming a fiasco.

Council expresses its anxiety that the shift to Universal Credit will threaten jobs at Oxford City Council, without any guarantee of a place in the DWP for our staff, nor for financial recompense for the Council.

Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the Welfare Reform Minister, Lord Freud, on these matters, and to seek the support of all groups leaders willing to sign the letter.

**(3) Oxford City Council Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Policy - (Proposer – Councillor Joe McManners)**

Council recognises that Oxford City Council had a longstanding desire to tackle the poor standards and problems found in the Private Rental Sector (PRS). Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are known from survey work to have some of the poorest conditions in the sector. Council notes that Oxford City Council (OCC) lobbied for powers to extend HMO licensing beyond mandatory licensing (which is 3 or more stories and 5 or more unrelated residents); that when the power to license all HMOs was granted, OCC has been one of the first councils to use these powers; that our scheme started in January and is in two phases, starting with the larger HMOs, particularly those with previous problems.

Council further notes that the aims of the schemes are to improve standards for tenants, to provide a way of regulating previously unaccountable landlords and to make sure problematic HMOs for neighbours can be tackled. Council believes that by licensing all HMOs, it can be sure that landlords will have a level playing field and that action can and should be taken against any that try to avoid licensing.

Council notes that enforcement work against landlords continues alongside this scheme and the two strands are mutually reinforcing. Council is proud that Oxford City Council is one of the leading local authorities in England with a sound record of vigorous enforcement against bad landlords.

This Council therefore resolves:

- (1) To reiterate its complete support for the work the officers are getting on with by licensing all HMOs.
- (2) That the HMO licensing scheme as it stands is one that we believe will improve standards for tenants
- (3) That HMOs are an important part of the PRS and the Council's priority needs to remain driving up standards universally across the sector so that rogue landlords will no longer have any place in Oxford.

(4) **Sustainable Purpose Built Student Accommodation -**  
**(Proposer - Councillor Antonia Bance)**

Council welcomes the remarkable contribution that our two world-class universities make to Oxford, and the vast range of benefits that they bring to the local economy, and to the social and cultural life of our city. Council endorses the established Local Plan/Core Strategy policy of seeking to reduce the number of students who live in the private rented sector by increasing the amount of purpose-built student housing in the city, and believes that this policy, along with the implementation of tougher regulation of the private rented sector, will bring benefits to the whole community.

Council asks the Executive to increase the efforts that it is already making to encourage the construction of further purpose-built student housing in appropriate and sustainable locations and to ensure that future policies and planning documents recognise the extensive and valuable contribution that students make to our city.

(5) **Proposed Electoral Reform - (Proposer - Councillor David Williams)**

The Council believes the proposals of the Coalition Government and Boundary Commission with regard to amendments to the Representation of the People Act, notably the scheme to reduce the present Parliamentary representation and the recommendation to alter voter registration from a compulsory household identification to a US style individual voluntary registration on the electoral roll will undermine democratic representation in Oxford.

Council invites the Executive to:-

- (a) conclude, on reviewing the recommendations, that reducing the number of MPs from 650 to 600 will result in a less representative Parliament and mean that the local character and opinions of the electoral will be further eroded, lost in much larger constituency structures. Far from increasing the size of constituencies the Executive believes that the City would be better served with a reduction in the number of voters in each constituency in order that Oxford City boundary could encompass two full Parliamentary constituencies;
- (b) conclude that the proposal to move to individual voluntary registration will mean that large numbers of poor and vulnerable voters will drop off the electoral register in Oxford and could mean up to 10 million voters nationally will no longer be on the electoral rolls,

and, depending upon the Executive's conclusion, to write to the Boundary Commission and the Coalition Government Minister proposing that the changes to the existing legislation do not proceed.

(6) **Cornmarket Notice Board - (Proposer - Councillor Nuala Young)**

This Council believes that the new rules on leaflet distribution in the City Centre will restrict small voluntary and campaigning organisations who don't have charitable status and aren't religious or political from distributing leaflets, stifling their ability to promote fundraising events, public meetings and other activities.

Council therefore invites the Executive to resolve to assist these smaller voluntary and campaigning organisations by providing free a public notice board in Cornmarket similar to those near Oxford Brookes where groups can display posters.

(7) **Health and Social Care Bill – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams)**

"Oxford City Council believes the Health and Social Care Bill currently before Parliament and in the House of Lords will:

- Significantly increase the portion of Oxfordshire NHS owned and operated in the interests of profit-making corporations.
- Increase costs, fragment services and reduce the quality of care.
- Lead to the closure of NHS hospitals in Oxfordshire.
- Dismantle vital cooperative relationships built over many years.
- Force drastic change on an organisation which requires stability.
- Create increased transaction costs and profits at the expense of patient care.
- Give powers to the Oxfordshire Clinical Consortia to deny care, close services, introduce charges and top-up fees and sell private insurance.
- Remove the Secretary of State's duty to provide a Health Service free at the point of use.
- Leave Oxfordshire NHS unprotected against the full impact of European Union competition laws by removing the public service exclusion clause.
- Remove the cap on the number of private patients NHS Hospitals in Oxfordshire can treat, thus denying care to NHS patients

For these reasons this Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write forthwith to the Government spokesperson in the House of Lords to consider these issues and decide to:-

- (a) Call upon all members of the House of Lords, regardless of Party affiliation, to reject the Health and Social Care Bill;
- (b) Explore the reasons behind the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nurses opposition to this Bill;
- (c) Take into account the general level of opposition by the public to the privatisation of the NHS."

**(8) Means tests for Councillors – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft)**

This Council agrees that Councillors with an annual household income exceeding £75,000 have no need to claim their allowance and that this money would be better spent in the interests of the City's Council Tax payers.

With this in mind, Council agrees to set up a Committee to decide the details of a system of means testing for City Councillors in order to remove the allowance from those councillors with annual incomes exceeding £75,000.

Council requests that those Councillors currently falling into this category voluntarily give up their allowance until a formal system is introduced.

Council also agrees to request that City Councillors who are also County Councillors put forward a motion to the same ends to the County Council.

**(9) Resignation of the City Council Leader – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft)**

Oxford City Council has engaged in transactions resulting in public land being sold to Oxford Brookes University. Council has also decided a major planning application by Brookes that has received a large amount of opposition from local residents.

Council understands that it would be perfectly reasonable for members of the public to conclude that the Leader of Oxford City Council, Bob Price, has a conflict of interest when dealing with Oxford Brookes as he is a Director at the university.

With this in mind Council agrees, to remove the Leader from office as provided for in paragraph 1.4(c) of the Constitution.

**(10) Temple Cowley and Blackbird Leys Pools – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft)**

If the current plans for a new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys were to go ahead, the land at Temple Cowley along with playing fields (and mature trees) in Blackbird Leys will be lost – probably forever.

As councillors we are entrusted to safeguard the City's assets for future generations.

With this in mind, this Council asks the Executive to put plans for a new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys on hold until:

- (a) An alternative source of funding becomes available other than the proposed funds from the sale of Temple Cowley Pool.
- (b) An alternative site for the new pool, which does not encroach on existing playing fields or have a negative effect on neighbouring residents' lives, is found.

**(11) Oxford Transport Strategy and Motorcycles – (Proposer – Councillor Stuart Craft)**

Oxfordshire County Council's Transport Strategy fails to address the benefits of motorcycle use as an alternative to the car.

Motorcycles can be a cheap alternative to cars for commuters who live off the main bus routes. Motorcycles take up less road space than cars and can fit through smaller gaps which keeps traffic flowing.

Modern bikes are very fuel efficient and are subject to more emission controls (within the EU) than cars. As motorcycles spend less time stationary than other vehicles the engines also run more efficiently.

With this in mind, this Council agrees to write to the County Council encouraging councillors to investigate initiatives that would encourage more motorcycle usage across the county.

**(12) Language Schools – (Proposer – Councillor Nuala Young)**

This Council believes that occasional meeting between police representatives and the Oxford language schools reflected in the 'Language Summit' need to be formalised on a regular basis and the range of issues discussed widened to include not only security but the behaviour and wellbeing of summer school students .

The Council will seek to re-establish the original 'Language School Forum' with full Council officer support. The Forum will seek to bring together all summer school and EFL providers with the intention of establishing a 'Code of Conduct' on a range of issues to guide the operation of language school groups and their activities in

the City environment and to create a set of quality standards for foreign students studying in the City for short periods of time. A report on how a revived Language School Forum could be reconstituted with the agreed objectives and incorporating all interested parties should be brought to the City Executive Board in the late autumn.

**(13) Autumn Revised Budget – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams)**

With surpluses in reserves now in excess of £5.2 million, the Council believes that now is the time to reassess the Annual budget for 2011- 2012 with a mid term Budget Review with appropriate amendments to the Councils spending plans.

Oxford City Council adopts the amended budget as set out below. The Council will retain £3.4 million as a prudent reserve and spend £1.8 million on the identified themes as set out below within the remaining financial year.

£1000's	2011/12 (half year)	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<b><u>Additional Savings</u></b>				
Limit SRA allowance on CEB to five Councillors and reduce remainder by £2k each	-22.5	-45	-45	-45
Further energy savings and income from grants and advice to external organisations	0	-10	-10	-15
Increase parking charges in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base budget)	0	0	0	0
Increase taxi licensing fees in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base)	0	-13	-13	-13
Increase Planning fees in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base)	0	-3	-3	-3
Increase Licensing fees in line with inflation (2% more than assumed in base)	0	-10	-10	-10
Revise down senior staff no.s/salaries to reflect reduced budgets & responsibilities	-50	-200	-200	-200
Abandon sale of St Clement Car Park	0	-60	-60	-60
Increase incomes from property by 0.5% over 4 years	0	0	0	0
income from solar feedin tariff	-10	-40	-40	-40
Take out £1500 per member in exchange for area cttee budget	-36	-72	-72	-72
<b>Total additional savings</b>	<b>-118.5</b>	<b>-453</b>	<b>-453</b>	<b>-458</b>
<b>Cumulative additional savings</b>	<b>-118.5</b>	<b>-571.5</b>	<b>-1024.5</b>	<b>-1482.5</b>

<b><u>Additional costs</u></b>				
Additional pru borrowing costs on lost capital receipt from St Clements car park	115	224	219	213
additional part-time sustainability officer	10	20	20	20
reinstate area committee budgets, area planning & staffing	101	202	202	202
Prudential borrowing on other capital investment of £500k	25	49	48	46
keep Temple Cowley Pool open	113	159	159	159
reinstate free green waste collection	74.5	214	279	279
new fund-raising officer	25	50	50	50
<b>Total additional costs</b>	<b>463.5</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>969</b>
<b><u>Net effect on budget in-year</u></b>	<b><u>345</u></b>	<b><u>465</u></b>	<b><u>524</u></b>	<b><u>511</u></b>
<b><u>Cumulative effect on budget</u></b>	<b><u>345</u></b>	<b><u>810</u></b>	<b><u>1334</u></b>	<b><u>1845</u></b>
Alternative budget transfer to/(from) reserves	-345	-465	-524	-511
<b>Alternative Budget Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

## Green Group amendment to Capital Budget

	2011/12 £000'S	2012/13 £000'S	2013/14 £000'S	2014/15 £000'S
<b>CAPITAL PROGRAM AS PER CEB 9TH FEBRUARY</b>	28,777	13,677	13,480	12,295
<b>SAVINGS</b>				
Pool extn to BBL leisure centre	7,365	500	0	0
Rephasing of buildings refurbishment programme (5 years not 4)		500	500	500
<b>ADDITIONAL SPENDING</b>				
buildings & energy improvements to Temple Cowley Pools & Gym	3,000	0	0	0
investment in solar array (s) on Council buildings	500	0	0	0
<b>REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAM</b>	<b>24,912</b>	<b>12,677</b>	<b>12,980</b>	<b>11,795</b>
<b>FINANCING</b>				
<b>FINANCING AS PER CEB REPORT 9TH FEBRUARY</b>	28,777	13,677	13,480	12,295
<b>Savings</b>				
Savings in Prudential borrowing re competition pool	-7000			

<b>Savings in use of capital receipts re competition pool</b>	-365	-500		
Savings in use of capital receipts rephasing of refurbishment		-500	-500	-500
<b>Additions</b>				
Additional prudential borrowing re solar arrays	500			
<b>Additional prudential borrowing re Temple Cowley Pool</b>	3000			
<b>REVISED CAPITAL FINANCING</b>	<b>24,912</b>	<b>12,677</b>	<b>12,980</b>	<b>11,795</b>

**(14) National Planning Framework – (Proposer – Councillor David Williams)**

With the Coalition Government launching a consultative period on changes to planning requirements for land development under a new National Planning Policy Framework Oxford City Council would seek to input to that consultation by making the following comment:

The key to new housing development rests with general economic development and change not deregulation. This obvious conclusion was accepted by both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties prior to the last election and neither party proposed radical changes to planning policies. There is therefore no popular mandate for these changes

This Council supports the stance taken by the Campaign for Rural England, the National Trust and the RSPB that revision of the protection of the most fertile farmland as identified in the original Open Green Space Planning Document by a revised code that suggests (paragraph 167) ‘Local Authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land’ is a retrograde step and will effectively lead to a free for all of development on prime agricultural land.

This Council believes that the existing requirements on developers have been built up over many generations to provide a balance between the need to meet housing need and the duty to protect the environment. The structure as it is already provides a positive range of opportunities and great flexibility for developers and to abandon controls that have worked will only lead to further erosion of the Green Belt and green space availability.

The presumptions within the new proposals will shift the emphasis in planning from developing brownfield sites first in preference to prime Greenfield sites. This will mean not only loss of countryside areas but will also undermine urban redevelopment.

Oxford City Council believes that there is an intrinsic value to Greenfield sites not only aesthetically best quality agricultural land will play a critical part in sustainable development providing food in

a world of global pressures from climate change and population growth

At the heart of the framework is the weak definition of sustainable development which emphasises the primacy of business and housing development over almost all considerations. Oxford City Council believes, notwithstanding having an approved Core Strategy, there will be increased pressures on Oxford's green open spaces, transport system and community facilities from developers being able to suggest that virtually any project is sustainable.

Oxford City Council believes that there is an intrinsic value to Greenfield sites not only aesthetically but because best quality agricultural land will play a critical part in sustainable development providing food in a world of global pressures from climate change and population growth. The Oxford Green Belt also needs strong protection to provide a unique setting to this important historic City.

Oxford City Council calls on the Government not to implement the changes envisaged in the consultative National Planning Framework Document.

**(15) Diversity of the Local High Street – (Proposer – Councillor Ruth Wilkinson)**

Council notes:

Oxford Residents and traders have expressed concern about the need for a variety of shops in the City Centre, our District Centres and in local neighbourhoods.

Diverse shopping areas, with a healthy representation of small traders, can form an integral part of the social fabric of local communities;

The competitive environment of the high street increasingly tends to produce generic streets populated by chain stores, resulting in “Clone Towns”;

The Localism Bill is designed to give more powers to local councils and local people to shape their neighbourhoods;

Liberal Democrat parliamentarians have tabled an amendment to the Localism Bill – “The Cambridge Amendment” (153AKC) – that would allow councils and the local community to protect the diversity of the local high street by giving councils a new power to take into account whether the business is “independent” or “multiple”.

Labour parliamentarians have tabled an amendment (153AKA) that requires councils to adopt a sequential, “town centre first” approach to development of retail sites in order to stop retail diversity in town centres being harmed by out-of-town developments.

**Recommendation:**

**Council requests the Leader to write to both City MPs and to the leaders of all political parties in the House of Lords, asking that they support both these amendments to the Localism Bill.**

(Additional information to support the Motion)

## LORDS AMENDMENT FORM

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1 = Clause 2 = Schedule 3 = Preamble 4 = Title	Clause or Schedule Number	1 = Before clause 2 = Clause 3 = After clause 4 = Before schedule 5 = Schedule 6 = After schedule	Page Number	Line Number	Word Number	1 = Leave out 2 = Leave out and insert 3 = Insert 4 = note – CWH only		

**Title and stage of Bill**      **LOCALISM BILL Committee Stage**

After Clause 106

**LORD GREAVES**

**LORD TOPE**

Insert the following new Clause –

**“Health and diversity of town centres and high streets**

After section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (preparation of local development documents) insert –

**“19A Town centres and high streets**

- (1) The duties under section 13 include a requirement to assess the vitality and diversity of the shopping areas in the area.
- (2) When preparing local development documents and other local planning documents the local planning authority must consider the results of that assessment and consider whether to include appropriate policies to promote the vitality and diversity of those shopping areas.
- (3) The local planning authority may prepare a scheme for retail vitality and diversity which may be a local development document or other local planning document.
- (4) Policies set out in documents prepared under subsections (2) and (3) may –
  - (a) define a network of retail centres in the area,
  - (b) assess the existing character and vitality of those retail centres,
  - (c) designate the desired retail mix for each of those retail centres,
  - (d) promote sustainability and diversity in the retail mix that is desired in each case.
- (5) The local planning authority must consult with the local community when making the assessment under subsections (1) and (2) and deciding whether to adopt policies under subsections (2) and (3).
- (6) If a planning application is submitted for –
  - (a) a retail use, or

- (b) a change of use from a retail use,  
and policies under subsections (2) and (3) are still in preparation, the applicant must provide a statement to the local planning authority that sets out how the development will impact on the criteria identified in paragraph (4)(d) and the local planning authority must consult the local community before coming to a decision.
- (7) In this section –
- “local community” includes the traders in each shopping centre;
  - “shopping area” means an area of a town centre or high street where a substantial use is retail;
  - “sustainability and diversity” means that there is an appropriate balance of –
    - (a) independent and multiple traders,
    - (b) unit sizes, and
    - (c) a balances of classes of use.”

**LABOUR AMENDMENT 153AKA TO THE LOCALISM BILL**

After Clause 105  
LORD MCKENZIE OF LUTON  
LORD BEECHAM  
LORD PATEL OF BRADFORD

153AKA

Insert the following new Clause—

“Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: retail diversity

After section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (local development scheme) insert—

“15A Retail diversity

- (1) The local planning authority must prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their “retail diversity scheme”.
- (2) The retail diversity scheme must form part of the local development scheme within two years of the local development scheme being published or within two years of this Act being passed, whichever is later.
- (3) The scheme must—
  - (a) define a network and hierarchy of retail centres in the local authority area,
  - (b) assess the need for development in retail centres,
  - (c) identify sites for development based on the sequential approach, and
  - (d) promote retail diversity.

(4) In this section—

“retail diversity” means a mix of retail provision that meets the requirements of the local catchment area in terms of range and quality of comparison and convenience retail businesses;

“sequential approach” means that local planning authorities must identify sites that are suitable, available and viable for development in the following order—

- (a) locations in appropriate existing centres;
  - (b) edge of centre locations, with preference given to sites that are or will be well connected to existing retail centres; and
  - (c) out of centre sites with preference given to sites well served by a choice of transport and closest to an existing centre.
- (5) The Secretary of State may direct the local planning authority to make such amendments to the scheme as the Secretary of State thinks appropriate.
- (6) Any direction given under subsection (5) must include the Secretary of State’s reasons for giving the direction.
- (7) The local planning authority must consult the local community in developing the scheme.
- (8) The local community to be consulted under subsection (7) must include—
- (a) a parish council or parish councils authorised to act in relation to the neighbourhood area or areas to which the retail diversity scheme relates subject to section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990,
  - (b) a “qualifying body” authorised to act in relation to the neighbourhood area or areas to which the retail diversity scheme relates subject to section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and
  - (c) any other local person at the discretion of the local planning authority.
- (9) Where a retail planning application is submitted and there is no retail diversity scheme in place—
- (a) the applicant must provide a statement to the local planning authority that sets out how the development impacts on the criteria identified in subsection (3), and
  - (b) the local planning authority must consult the local community, before the local planning authority may reach a decision on the application.””

**(16) Carbon Footprint – (Proposer – Councillors Jean Fooks and Michael Gotch)**

Council welcomes the excellent progress that Oxford City Council is making towards reducing the carbon footprint of its own buildings and operations.

However, many planning applications for new buildings or extensions pay no regard to the need to reduce carbon emissions and thereby help to slow climate change. As one-third of UK energy consumption is used in buildings, to heat, cool or light them, it is imperative that we make every effort to reduce this, leading to reduced costs as well as reduced carbon emissions.

Council therefore asks the Planning Department to remind all applicants of the need to minimise the energy use of their buildings and request that information is provided on the estimated carbon emissions of the proposed buildings. This information should be included in Committee reports.

Council further asks the Executive Board member to ensure that all possible steps are taken to make Oxford a leading authority in this respect, before such measures become compulsory in a few years' time.

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