

15. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

(a) **Proposed closure of BBC Oxford news operations** – (Proposer – Councillor Mike Rowley)

This Council notes with concern the reported plan to close BBC Oxford and move the BBC's operations from here to Southampton, with the loss of the local news and sport bulletin and the discontinuation of many local radio programmes, to be replaced with national and regional content.

This Council further notes that BBC Radio Oxford is Oxford's most popular local radio station and has risen in popularity over the past year, increasing from 76,000 to 80,000 listeners according to May's Radio Joint Audience Research figures.

This Council believes that local news is important to local democracy, and that local journalism helps build community by being able to keep in touch with what is important to local people and to shape reporting accordingly.

This Council opposes the BBC's plans, strongly asserts the importance of local broadcasting to people in Oxford, and resolves to request the Leader and the Chief Executive to write to the Director-General of the BBC, the Chair of the BBC Trust and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport expressing our views.

(b) **Public Sector Pension contributions increase** – (Proposer – Councillor Mike Rowley)

Council notes with grave concern the decision of the coalition government announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to impose a 3.2% contribution increase on members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Scheme average member contributions will increase from 6.6% to 9.8% next year. Additionally the value of all local government employees' pensions will be reduced on a cumulative basis by the change in the basis of indexation to the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Council shares the views expressed by the Local Government Association (LGA) in its letter to the Chancellor of February 16th 2011 where it pointed out that this level of increase will inevitably lead to a massive increase in opt-outs from the pension scheme by lower paid employees who form the majority of the local authority workforce.

Council resolves to write to the Chancellor, the Chief Secretary and the Secretary of State for Local Government to support the LGA and to call for a fundamental rethink of this damaging approach to public sector pension schemes.

(c) **Business Rate Concessions** - (Proposer – Councillor David Williams)

Given that the New Localism Bill will return the Business Rate back to local authority control and the new legislation may provide the Council with the opportunity to vary the business rate within the City, this Council asks the Executive to investigate the potential of establishing enterprise zones where a special reduced business rate focused on helping small independent traders are established in different parts of the City. The report on the possibility of introducing such a scheme to be brought to the Executive in the autumn once the full extent of the new legislation is known with a view to the potential implementation in the financial year 2012 - 2013.

(d) **Repeal of the 1908 Smallholdings and Allotment Act -**
(Proposer - Councillor Nuala Young)

This Council invites the Executive to stand opposed to the suggested abolition to the 1908 Smallholdings and Allotment Act (section 23) which orders Councils to provide sufficient number of allotment plots to local residents where there is a demand. Executive is invited not to place allotments and smallholding in its list of potential land sales to developers as envisaged in the Localism Bill and existing allotment sites will not appear in Council plans for future housing development.

The Executive's stance on this issue should be made known to Mr. Eric Pickles the Secretary of State for Communities who is known to be suggesting the repeal of the 1908 legislation under his list of new measures to supposedly reduce Council bureaucracy. Mr. Pickles to be informed that the regulation requiring local authorities to provide allotments is not burdensome or extra red tape and is a vital aspect of communities growing their own food and supporting local sustainability.

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

Although there have been cosmetic changes recently announced by the Coalition Government to the proposed Health and Social Care Bill, this Council is still concerned at the likely impact of the proposed new legislation on health social care provision in Oxford and throughout the Country. This Council is concerned that the central theme of introducing competition and private sector tendering via GP led consortia with an agency (Monitor) to stimulate private sector involvement remains a core element of the proposed legislation. The key objective of the legislation to open up the NHS to private sector cherry picking remains and the gradual erosion of NHS delivery under the proposals will still be the end result.

The Council is also concerned at the cost of the reforms estimated at over £2billion especially the redundancy of senior administrators within the present Primary Care Trusts and their subsequent re-employment with the GP commissioning consortia a move that will alone cost in excess of £1billion. With this in view and the NHS

facing a £20billion shortfall in its revenues his Council calls on the Government to abandon the proposed legislation and return with more progressive reforms that include providing revenue that will match the increasing demands on the NHS.

(f) **BBC Oxford Studio Closure – (Proposer - Councillor David Williams)**

This Council is opposed to the proposal by the BBC Trust to close their Oxford Banbury Road Studio and see the concept as a significant dilution of the BBC commitment to local broadcasting services. The proposed ending of the local radio and television production centre would deny the people of Oxford a truly comprehensive service and mean that local communities do not have a voice.

There is a recognition that the Coalition Government have frozen the license fee for six years and that this would lead to sustained reductions in the BBC's services however local radio and television is as much a part of the BBC as any other aspect of the Corporation's activities and centres of local journalistic excellence such as Oxford should be retained.

Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the BBC Governors expressing our concerns.

(g) **Charges for residents' parking zones – (Proposer - Councillor Alan Armitage)**

Council notes from Oxfordshire County Council's Provisional 2010/11 Revenue and Capital Outturn Report (Annex 7) that income from Residents' Parking Zones in Oxford City exceeded costs by over £110,000, despite repeated assurances from representatives of the County Council that residents were only being asked to ensure that RPZ administration costs were recovered.

Council condemns this duplicity and asks the Chief Executive to write to the County Council to demand that a rebate is paid to residents who have been forced to pay excessively high charges for the privilege of parking near their own homes.

(h) **Speed limit enforcement – (Proposer – Councillor Alan Armitage)**

Council welcomes the fact that speed enforcement by Thames Valley Police using roadside cameras has come back into effect. Council believes that enforcement of all speed limits is necessary to ensure that injuries and fatalities on Oxford's roads continue to reduce.

Council therefore calls upon Thames Valley Police to give enforcement of 20mph speed limits in Oxford their urgent attention.

(i) **Garden waste collection arrangements – (Proposer – Councillor Clark Brundin)**

Council is very concerned at the discriminatory nature of the recently introduced arrangements for the collection of garden waste. Residents who cannot accommodate the brown wheelie bin are charged over four times as much for the same annual volume of garden waste if they opt for the new non-reusable sacks. In addition, the sacks can only be obtained in Cowley and Horspath.

Council is further very concerned that the relief for those on benefits appears to apply only to the bin charge, and not the sack charge.

Council believes the costs of collection should be shared equally among participating residents, and therefore requests that:

1. The Number of sacks available for £35 should be increased accordingly, as should the number provided for £25;
2. Much more convenient ways of obtaining the new sacks should be provided, with them being available at City Centre offices or delivered by crews on request once initial payment has been made;
3. The relief for those on benefits must apply to the charge for sacks as well as the charge for bins.