

Address by Diana Volpe:

Given that:

1. Serco Leisure is a part of the Serco Group PLC, and is therefore functionally indistinguishable and an integral part of Serco and the Serco Group;
2. Serco has a reputation as a leading name in running immigration detention centres for profit, a motive that inevitably seeks to drive down costs to the detriment of those subject to immigration control and earning a terrible track record in doing so. These include, but are not limited to: cases accommodation filled with rats, sewage-filled sinks and cockroaches; allegations of abuse by Serco staff at Yarl's Wood culminating in a highly critical report by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons in 2015; systematic denial of abuse and degrading treatment even in the face of over 100 migrant women going on hunger strike in protest of their conditions;
3. Oxford's repeatedly asserted its aspiration to be a City of Sanctuary;
4. The public feels strongly about this decision, as evidenced by the petition arising from the news of this bid and the people standing outside today;
5. That this bid includes plans to convert much sought-after hall space in Blackbird Leys in ways that may take away important community spaces from local sports clubs that are dedicated and inclusive to women and nonbinary people, migrants and asylum seekers as well as other marginalised populations.

**I ask: Do you not see a fundamental contradiction between SERCO's well-documented abuse of asylum seekers and refugees, and Oxford's aspiration to be a Local Authority of Sanctuary?**

By proceeding with this, you are essentially sending a message to our community that it is acceptable to take money funding for public infrastructure through the exploitation of migrants, all while claiming to be a place of refuge for them.

This page is intentionally left blank