

To: Council
Date: 15 July 2024
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: **Motions and amendments received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18**

Councillors are asked to debate and reach conclusions on the motions and amendment listed below in accordance with the Council's rules for debate.

The Constitution permits an hour for debate of these motions.

Introduction

This document sets out motions received by the Head of Law and Governance in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.18 by the deadline of 1.00pm on 3 July 2024, as amended by the proposers.

All substantive amendments sent by councillors to the Head of Law and Governance by publication of the briefing note are also included below.

Unfamiliar terms are explained in the glossary or in footnotes.

Motions will be taken in turn from the Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, Independent Oxford Alliance, Oxford Community Independents, Oxford Independent Group, Real Independent groups in that order.

Introduction

- a) Oxford United Stadium (Proposed by Cllr Mary Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Simon Ottino)
- b) Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford city river action plan (proposed by Cllr Jo Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Katherine Miles) [Amendment by Cllr Simon Ottino, seconded by Cllr Jemima Hunt] [Amendment by Cllr Chris Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Alex Powell]
- c) Making Oxford a Truly Walkable City (proposed by Cllr Max Morris, seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr) [Amendment by Cllr Ed Turner, seconded by Cllr Anna Railton]
- d) Scrap the Two-Child Benefit Cap (proposed by Cllr Theodore Jupp, seconded by Cllr Chris Smowton) [Amendment by Cllr Mary Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Susan Brown] [Amendment by Cllr Alex Powell, seconded by Cllr Max Morris]
- e) Bus travel for asylum seekers in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Alex Powell, seconded by Cllr Dianne Regisford)

a) Oxford United Stadium (Proposed by Cllr Mary Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Simon Ottino)

Labour Group Motion

This Council expresses its support for Oxford United's proposals for a new stadium at Stratfield Brake

b) Motion of No Confidence in Thames Water and development of an Oxford city river action plan (proposed by Cllr Jo Sandelson, seconded by Cllr Katherine Miles) [Amendment by Cllr Simon Ottino, seconded by Cllr Jemima Hunt] [Amendment by Cllr Chris Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Alex Powell]

Liberal Democrat Group Motion

This council has no confidence in the water company Thames Water, which provides services to households in Oxford. For too long now water company bosses have been able to get away with paying themselves millions of pounds in bonuses while dumping millions of tonnes of raw sewage into the River Thames and under-investing in infrastructure. Despite increasing public scrutiny and despair, dividends continue to be paid out to investors that form part of the company's complex corporate structure. At the same time, the company has been reneging on its commitments to invest in infrastructure investments.¹

The consequences are many. Wildlife is disappearing and rivers are unfit to swim in. For example, Oxford has a long tradition of wild swimming in the River Thames at Port Meadow. The city celebrated when Wolvercote Mill Stream received designated bathing water status in 2022.² But the level of pollution caused by sewage means the Bathing site is currently classified as Poor and bathing is not advised.³

Thames Water is on the brink of collapse and has a mountain of debt estimated at £18bn which it may pass on to taxpayers if the company were to be nationalised.⁴ Furthermore, the current regulator Ofwat has demonstrated it is too weak to stand up to Thames Water.⁵

The Sewage Scandal must end to protect the River Thames. In response, this Council believes that water companies, including Thames Water, should be put into Special Administration and transformed into public benefit companies⁶; and Ofwat should be replaced with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps.

At a local level in response to the river water emergency, the City Council can demonstrate its commitment to support the restoration of river health, by signing up to the Local Charter for Rivers.⁷ This sets out steps that councils can take to use their powers to restore our rivers to health at a local level.⁸

To this end the Council resolves:

That it has no confidence in Thames Water.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/28/thames-water-board-150m-dividend-payout-funding-u-turn>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bathing-waters-list-of-designated-waters-in-england/list-of-current-bathing-waters>

³ <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/waterways/bathing-water> ;

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?site=ukj1402-11946>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/29/will-rising-debt-cause-thames-water-to-sink-under-a-labour-government>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/28/thames-water-board-150m-dividend-payout-funding-u-turn>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-66043763>

⁷ <https://riveractionuk.com/local-charter-for-rivers/>

⁸ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hOKwnEXtzke2oO-MWrmXnXxFNHV5KZhV/view>

That the Council requests the Leader:

- writes to the Secretary of State of His Majesty's Government with responsibility for water companies to call to: replace Ofwat with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps; and place Thames Water into Special Administration to ensure the company's debt does not fall on the Government.
 - commissions a cabinet report with an analysis of current actions and gaps in line with the Local River Charter, and recommendations for developing an Oxford City River Action Plan.⁹
-

Labour Group Amendment

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The consequences are many. Wildlife is disappearing and rivers are unfit to swim in. For example, Oxford has a long tradition of wild swimming in the River Thames at Port Meadow. The city celebrated when Wolvercote Mill Stream received designated bathing water status in 2022.¹¹ But the level of pollution caused by sewage means the Bathing site is currently classified as Poor and bathing is not advised.¹²

~~Thames Water is on the brink of collapse and has a mountain of debt estimated at £18bn which it may pass on to taxpayers if the company were to be nationalised.¹³ Furthermore, the~~ **The** current regulator Ofwat has demonstrated it is too weak to stand up to Thames Water.¹⁴

The Sewage Scandal must end to protect the River Thames. In response, this Council believes that water companies, including Thames Water, should be put into Special Administration and **brought back into public ownership** ~~transformed into public benefit companies¹⁵~~; and Ofwat should be replaced with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps.

At a local level in response to the river water emergency, the City Council can demonstrate its commitment to support the restoration of river health, by signing up to

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¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/jun/28/thames-water-board-150m-dividend-payout-funding-u-turn>

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the Local Charter for Rivers.¹⁶ This sets out steps that councils can take to use their powers to restore our rivers to health at a local level.¹⁷

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 - commissions a cabinet report with an analysis of current actions and gaps in line with the Local River Charter, and recommendations for developing an Oxford City River Action Plan.¹⁸
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If amended, the Motion would read:

This council has no confidence in the water company Thames Water, which provides services to households in Oxford. For too long now water company bosses have been able to get away with paying themselves millions of pounds in bonuses while dumping millions of tonnes of raw sewage into the River Thames and under-investing in infrastructure. Despite increasing public scrutiny and despair, dividends continue to be paid out to investors that form part of the company's complex corporate structure. At the same time, the company has been renegeing on its commitments to invest in infrastructure investments.¹⁹

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The current regulator Ofwat has demonstrated it is too weak to stand up to Thames Water.²²

The Sewage Scandal must end to protect the River Thames. In response, this Council believes that water companies, including Thames Water, should be put into Special Administration and brought back into public ownership; and Ofwat should be replaced with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps.

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At a local level in response to the river water emergency, the City Council can demonstrate its commitment to support the restoration of river health, by signing up to the Local Charter for Rivers.²³ This sets out steps that councils can take to use their powers to restore our rivers to health at a local level.²⁴

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Green Group Amendment

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The consequences are many. Wildlife is disappearing and rivers are unfit to swim in. For example, Oxford has a long tradition of wild swimming in the River Thames at Port Meadow. The city celebrated when Wolvercote Mill Stream received designated bathing water status in 2022.²⁷ But the level of pollution caused by sewage means the Bathing site is currently classified as Poor and bathing is not advised.²⁸

Thames Water is on the brink of collapse and has a mountain of debt estimated at £18bn which it may pass on to taxpayers if the company were to be nationalised.²⁹

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Furthermore, the current regulator Ofwat has demonstrated it is too weak to stand up to Thames Water.³⁰

The Sewage Scandal must end to protect the River Thames. In response, this Council believes that water companies, including Thames Water, should be put into Special Administration and transformed into public benefit companies³¹; and Ofwat should be replaced with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps.

At a local level in response to the river water emergency, the City Council can demonstrate its commitment to support the restoration of river health, by signing up to the Local Charter for Rivers.³² This sets out steps that councils can take to use their powers to restore our rivers to health at a local level.³³

To this end the Council resolves:

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- writes to the Secretary of State of His Majesty's Government with responsibility for water companies to call to: replace Ofwat with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps; and place Thames Water into Special Administration to ensure the company's debt does not fall on the Government.
 - commissions a cabinet report with an analysis of current actions and gaps in line with the Local River Charter, and recommendations for developing an Oxford City River Action Plan.³⁴
 - **To reiterate this council's view that the long-term solution to the problems in our water system is to take the water firms - including Thames Water - back into public ownership.**
-

If approved, the Motion would read:

This council has no confidence in the water company Thames Water, which provides services to households in Oxford. For too long now water company bosses have been able to get away with paying themselves millions of pounds in bonuses while dumping millions of tonnes of raw sewage into the River Thames and under-investing in infrastructure. Despite increasing public scrutiny and despair, dividends continue to be paid out to investors that form part of the company's complex corporate structure. At the same time, the company has been reneging on its commitments to invest in infrastructure investments.³⁵

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The Sewage Scandal must end to protect the River Thames. In response, this Council believes that water companies, including Thames Water, should be put into Special Administration and transformed into public benefit companies⁴⁰; and Ofwat should be replaced with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps.

At a local level in response to the river water emergency, the City Council can demonstrate its commitment to support the restoration of river health, by signing up to the Local Charter for Rivers.⁴¹ This sets out steps that councils can take to use their powers to restore our rivers to health at a local level.⁴²

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If both amendments were approved, the Motion would read:

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c) Making Oxford a Truly Walkable City (proposed by Cllr Max Morris, seconded by Cllr Emily Kerr) [Amendment by Cllr Ed Turner, seconded by Cllr Anna Railton]

Green Group Motion

Council notes

1. Oxford was recently named as the UK's most walkable city, due to the small distances between key tourist attractions.⁵¹
2. The 2021 Census showed that 22% of Oxford residents walk to work, making walking the modal choice for more commuting residents than cycling at 17% or bus at 15%.⁵²
3. Studies show walking significantly improves both physical and mental health outcomes, and promotes longer and higher quality lives.⁵³
4. Research suggests lower income households - over-represented by 'female heads of house, children, young and older people, black and minority ethnic (BME) and disabled people' - rely on walking more often due to not owning a car.⁵⁴
5. There are inexpensive walking-related initiatives across Oxfordshire which have been successful, such as Oxford's health walks and Bicester Blue Lines.⁵⁵
6. Whilst some things which improve the pedestrian experience are County responsibilities there are others which the City Council has sole or joint responsibility for, such as new benches, water fountains, public toilets, and wayfinding.
7. The City Council could require residential dropped kerbs to be "Dutch style" entry kerbs, which keeps pavements flat and easier for wheelchair users.
8. Mapping work in London has provided councils with excellent dynamic local maps, allowing residents and visitors to walk more easily.⁵⁶
9. Pavement Parking is frequently named as one of the key issues facing pedestrians and wheelchair users. Government commissioned a report into this in 2020, and despite written questions and a debate, the results have not been published.⁵⁷
10. Lambeth has pioneered an innovative "Kerbside Strategy" which prioritises walking, street trees, benches, and local businesses and will reallocate 25% of kerbside space to people.⁵⁸

Council believes

⁵¹ <https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/the-uks-10-most-walkable-cities-have-been-revealed-052724#:~:text=Named%20the%20UK's%20most%20walkable,them%20in%20just%2022%20minutes.>

⁵² <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/883/majority-of-oxford-residents-commute-using-active-travel-or-public-transport-new-census-data-shows>

⁵³ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health/>

⁵⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c828f80ed915d07c9e363f7/future_of_mobility_access.pdf

⁵⁵ <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/1154/health-routes-in-bicester>

⁵⁶ <https://footways.london/>

⁵⁷ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-13/debates/4479BB2C-49BD-47FD-9C76-5149A8A12DF7/PavementParking>

⁵⁸ <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/streets-roads-transport/lambeth-kerbside-strategy>

1. Despite Oxford being a relatively small city with strong walking potential, the experience of walking or wheeling around the city needs urgent improvement.
2. We could build on Oxford's small size and strong reputation for walking to have a cohesive strategy to improve the pedestrian experience for everyone - and this would be relatively inexpensive to do with enormous health and wellness benefits.

Council resolves:

1. To request the Cabinet Member for Healthy Oxford:
 - a. discuss with officers the designing of a plan for improving walking in Oxford, based on local knowledge and existing research.
 - b. Works with the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon and the Cabinet Member for Culture and officers to create a walkable map of Oxford for tourists and locals alike.
 - c. Writes to the new Transport Minister on behalf of Oxford City Council, urging rapid release of the 2020 pavement parking consultation
 - d. Proposes the idea of a "Kerbside Strategy for Oxford" to the County Council.
2. To request the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management reviews opportunities to invest in public infrastructure to improve the city's walkability, such as benches, water fountains, public toilets, signage, lighting, and trees.
3. To request the Cabinet Member for Planning reviews mandating Dutch entry kerbs for residential drop kerb conversions planning conditions and considers this through the Equality Act 2010.

Labour Group Amendment

Council notes

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2. The 2021 Census showed that 22% of Oxford residents walk to work, making walking the modal choice for more commuting residents than cycling at 17% or bus at 15%.⁶⁰
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 - d. Proposes the idea of a “Kerbside Strategy for Oxford” to the County Council.
2. To request the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management reviews opportunities to invest in public infrastructure to improve the city’s walkability to **enable bids in the budget process**, ~~such as benches, water fountains, public toilets, signage, lighting, and trees.~~

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⁶⁴ <https://footways.london/>

⁶⁵ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-13/debates/4479BB2C-49BD-47FD-9C76-5149A8A12DF7/PavementParking>

⁶⁶ <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/streets-roads-transport/lambeth-kerbside-strategy>

3. To request the Cabinet Member for Planning reviews mandating Dutch entry kerbs for residential drop kerb conversions planning conditions and considers this through the Equality Act 2010.
-

If amended, the Motion would read:

Council notes

1. Oxford was recently named as the UK's most walkable city, due to the small distances between key tourist attractions.⁶⁷
2. The 2021 Census showed that 22% of Oxford residents walk to work, making walking the modal choice for more commuting residents than cycling at 17% or bus at 15%.⁶⁸
3. Studies show walking significantly improves both physical and mental health outcomes, and promotes longer and higher quality lives.⁶⁹
4. Research suggests lower income households - over-represented by 'female heads of house, children, young and older people, black and minority ethnic (BME) and disabled people' - rely on walking more often due to not owning a car.⁷⁰
5. There are inexpensive walking-related initiatives across Oxfordshire which have been successful, such as Oxford's health walks and Bicester Blue Lines.⁷¹
6. Whilst some things which improve the pedestrian experience are County responsibilities there are others which the City Council has sole or joint responsibility for, such as new benches, water fountains, public toilets, and wayfinding.
7. The City Council could require residential dropped kerbs to be "Dutch style" entry kerbs, which keeps pavements flat and easier for wheelchair users.
8. Mapping work in London has provided councils with excellent dynamic local maps, allowing residents and visitors to walk more easily.⁷²
9. Pavement Parking is frequently named as one of the key issues facing pedestrians and wheelchair users. Government commissioned a report into this in 2020, and despite written questions and a debate, the results have not been published.⁷³
10. Lambeth has pioneered an innovative "Kerbside Strategy" which prioritises walking, street trees, benches, and local businesses and will reallocate 25% of kerbside space to people.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ <https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/the-uks-10-most-walkable-cities-have-been-revealed-052724#:~:text=Named%20the%20UK's%20most%20walkable,them%20in%20just%2022%20minutes.>

⁶⁸ <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/883/majority-of-oxford-residents-commute-using-active-travel-or-public-transport-new-census-data-shows>

⁶⁹ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health/>

⁷⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c828f80ed915d07c9e363f7/future_of_mobility_access.pdf

⁷¹ <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/1154/health-routes-in-bicester>

⁷² <https://footways.london/>

⁷³ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-13/debates/4479BB2C-49BD-47FD-9C76-5149A8A12DF7/PavementParking>

⁷⁴ <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/streets-roads-transport/lambeth-kerbside-strategy>

Council believes

1. Despite Oxford being a relatively small city with strong walking potential, the experience of walking or wheeling around the city needs urgent improvement.
2. We could build on Oxford's small size and strong reputation for walking to have a cohesive strategy to improve the pedestrian experience for everyone - and this would be relatively inexpensive to do with enormous health and wellness benefits.

Council resolves:

1. To request the Cabinet Member for Healthy Oxford:
 - a. discuss with officers the designing of a plan for improving walking in Oxford, based on local knowledge and existing research.
 - b. Works with the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon and the Cabinet Member for Culture and officers to create a walkable map of Oxford for tourists and locals alike.
 - c. Writes to the new Transport Minister on behalf of Oxford City Council, urging rapid release of the 2020 pavement parking consultation
 - d. Proposes the idea of a "Kerbside Strategy for Oxford" to the County Council.
2. To request the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management reviews opportunities to invest in public infrastructure to improve the city's walkability to enable bids in the budget process.
3. To request the Cabinet Member for Planning reviews mandating Dutch entry kerbs for residential drop kerb conversions planning conditions and considers this through the Equality Act 2010.

d) Scrap the Two-Child Benefit Cap (proposed by Cllr Theodore Jupp, seconded by Cllr Chris Smowton) [Amendment by Cllr Mary Clarkson, seconded by Cllr Susan Brown] [Amendment by Cllr Alex Powell, seconded by Cllr Max Morris]

Liberal Democrat Group Motion

Council notes that:

- The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.
- The Child Poverty Action Group identified 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2021–22, with the prevalence of poverty much higher among Black and minority ethnic groups.⁷⁵
- Research by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and that the economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, cost the UK £39 billion every year.⁷⁶
- A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns that cost-of-living pressures on families are driving missed education.⁷⁷
- In a country already struggling with fewer and fewer young people supporting an ageing population, it is not in any case in our interests to attempt to prevent or delay people from raising children through financial pressure.
- Despite initially pledging to repeal the policy in 2020,⁷⁸ Sir Keir Starmer backtracked and pledged to keep the Tory policy,⁷⁹ before eventually adopting a noncommittal stance on the issue.⁸⁰

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council:

- Write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition expressing this council's strong support for a repeal of the two-child benefit cap.
 - Write to Oxford's MPs requesting that they in turn pressure both Government and Opposition to abolish the cap.
-

Labour Group Amendment

Council notes that:

- The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.
- The Child Poverty Action Group identified 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2021–22, with the prevalence of poverty much

⁷⁵ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

⁷⁶ https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/

⁷⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/> particularly para.148

⁷⁸ https://twitter.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1225465424092987393

⁷⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jul/16/labour-keep-two-child-benefit-cap-says-keir-starmer>

⁸⁰ <https://news.sky.com/story/starmer-softens-stance-on-two-child-benefit-cap-amid-snp-attacks-ahead-of-by-election-12940684>

- higher among Black and minority ethnic groups.⁸¹
- Research by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and that the economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, cost the UK £39 billion every year.⁸²
- A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns that cost-of-living pressures on families are driving missed education.⁸³
- In a country already struggling with fewer and fewer young people supporting an ageing population, it is not in any case in our interests to attempt to prevent or delay people from raising children through financial pressure.
- ~~Despite initially pledging to repeal the policy in 2020,⁸⁴ Sir Keir Starmer backtracked and pledged to keep the Tory policy,⁸⁵ before eventually adopting a noncommittal stance on the issue.⁸⁶~~

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council:

- Write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition expressing this council's strong support for a repeal of the two-child benefit cap.
 - Write to Oxford's MPs requesting that they in turn pressure both Government and Opposition to abolish the cap.
-

If amended, the Motion would read:

Council notes that:

- The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.
- The Child Poverty Action Group identified 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2021–22, with the prevalence of poverty much higher among Black and minority ethnic groups.⁸⁷
- Research by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and that the economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, cost the UK £39 billion every year.⁸⁸
- A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns that cost-of-living pressures on families are driving missed education.⁸⁹
- In a country already struggling with fewer and fewer young people supporting an ageing population, it is not in any case in our interests to

⁸¹ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

⁸² https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/

⁸³ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/> particularly para.148

⁸⁴ https://twitter.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1225465424092987393

⁸⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jul/16/labour-keep-two-child-benefit-cap-says-keir-starmer>

⁸⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/starmer-softens-stance-on-two-child-benefit-cap-amid-snp-attacks-ahead-of-by-election-12940684>

⁸⁷ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

⁸⁸ https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/

⁸⁹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/> particularly para.148

attempt to prevent or delay people from raising children through financial pressure.

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council:

- Write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition expressing this council's strong support for a repeal of the two-child benefit cap.
 - Write to Oxford's MPs requesting that they in turn pressure both Government and Opposition to abolish the cap.
-

Green Group Amendment

Council notes that:

- The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.
- The Child Poverty Action Group identified 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2021–22, with the prevalence of poverty much higher among Black and minority ethnic groups.⁹⁰
- Research by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and that the economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, cost the UK £39 billion every year.⁹¹
- A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns that cost-of-living pressures on families are driving missed education.⁹²
- ~~In a country already struggling with fewer and fewer young people supporting an ageing population, it is not in any case in our interests to attempt to prevent or delay people from raising children through financial pressure.~~
- **The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that 250,000 extra children per year are pushed into poverty by the Two Child Benefit Cap.[1] It is, therefore, urgent that government take proper action to address child poverty⁹³.**
- Despite initially pledging to repeal the policy in 2020,⁹⁴ Sir Keir Starmer backtracked and pledged to keep the Tory policy,⁹⁵ before eventually adopting a noncommittal stance on the issue.⁹⁶

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council:

⁹⁰ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

⁹¹ https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/

⁹² <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/> particularly para.148

⁹³ <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/two-child-limit-poverty-incentives-and-cost#:~:text=We%20estimate%20that%2050%2C000%20extra,one%20adult%20in%20paid%20work>

⁹⁴ https://twitter.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1225465424092987393

⁹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jul/16/labour-keep-two-child-benefit-cap-says-keir-starmer>

⁹⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/starmer-softens-stance-on-two-child-benefit-cap-amid-snp-attacks-ahead-of-by-election-12940684>

- Write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition expressing this council's strong support for a repeal of the two-child benefit cap.
 - Write to Oxford's MPs requesting that they in turn pressure both Government and Opposition to abolish the cap.
-

If approved, the Motion would read:

Council notes that:

- The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.
- The Child Poverty Action Group identified 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2021–22, with the prevalence of poverty much higher among Black and minority ethnic groups.⁹⁷
- Research by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and that the economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, cost the UK £39 billion every year.⁹⁸
- A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns that cost-of-living pressures on families are driving missed education.⁹⁹
- The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that 250,000 extra children per year are pushed into poverty by the Two Child Benefit Cap.[1] It is, therefore, urgent that government take proper action to address child poverty¹⁰⁰.
- Despite initially pledging to repeal the policy in 2020,¹⁰¹ Sir Keir Starmer backtracked and pledged to keep the Tory policy,¹⁰² before eventually adopting a noncommittal stance on the issue.¹⁰³

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council:

- Write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition expressing this council's strong support for a repeal of the two-child benefit cap.
 - Write to Oxford's MPs requesting that they in turn pressure both Government and Opposition to abolish the cap.
-

If both amendments were approved, the Motion would read:

Council notes that:

- The two-child limit, introduced by the Conservative Government in

⁹⁷ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

⁹⁸ https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two_child_limit/

⁹⁹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/> particularly para.148

¹⁰⁰ <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/two-child-limit-poverty-incentives-and-cost#:~:text=We%20estimate%20that%2050%2C000%20extra,one%20adult%20in%20paid%20work>

¹⁰¹ https://twitter.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1225465424092987393

¹⁰² <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jul/16/labour-keep-two-child-benefit-cap-says-keir-starmer>

¹⁰³ <https://news.sky.com/story/starmer-softens-stance-on-two-child-benefit-cap-amid-snp-attacks-ahead-of-by-election-12940684>

2017, restricts support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children in a family.

- The Child Poverty Action Group identified 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2021–22, with the prevalence of poverty much higher among Black and minority ethnic groups.¹⁰⁴
- Research by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and that the economic and societal effects of child poverty, including spending on public services, cost the UK £39 billion every year.¹⁰⁵
- A new report by the Commons Education Select Committee warns that cost-of-living pressures on families are driving missed education.¹⁰⁶
- The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that 250,000 extra children per year are pushed into poverty by the Two Child Benefit Cap.[1] It is, therefore, urgent that government take proper action to address child poverty¹⁰⁷.

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council:

- Write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition expressing this council's strong support for a repeal of the two-child benefit cap.
- Write to Oxford's MPs requesting that they in turn pressure both Government and Opposition to abolish the cap.

¹⁰⁴ <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

¹⁰⁵ <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/two-child-limit/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/41590/documents/205047/default/> particularly para.148

¹⁰⁷ <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/two-child-limit-poverty-incentives-and-cost#:~:text=We%20estimate%20that%20250%2C000%20extra,one%20adult%20in%20paid%20work>

e) Bus travel for asylum seekers in Oxford (proposed by Cllr Alex Powell, seconded by Cllr Dianne Regisford)

Green Group Motion

Council Notes:

1. There are an increasing number of asylum seekers being accommodated within the city, particularly in a hotel near to the Kassam Stadium.¹⁰⁸
2. Those asylum claimants who are in receipt of statutory support according to section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 receive average weekly financial support equating to just £8.86 per week for those in accommodation.¹⁰⁹
3. Oxford City Council has signed up to the values of the City of Sanctuary scheme undertaking a commitment to ensure that Oxford is a safe and supportive environment for sanctuary seekers.¹¹⁰
4. Oxfordshire County Council has also signalled its intention to become a County of Sanctuary, showcasing its own commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for people seeking sanctuary.¹¹¹
5. Numerous charities and organisations have drawn attention to the harms that hotel accommodation poses for asylum seekers: such as isolation from communities and resources.¹¹² This makes it even more important that support is accessible.
6. That the financial costs of travel within Oxford City make it more difficult for asylum seekers to access and engage with available sources of support.
7. That asylum seekers have recently made representations regarding the need for free bus passes to Oxfordshire County Council.¹¹³

Council Believes:

1. That Local Authorities, at both District and County Council level, have a moral and ethical duty, to the extent to which the law allows, to advocate for and protect all residents residing within their territorial area regardless of immigration status.
2. That access to support services should be open to all asylum seekers and should not be prohibited by transport costs.
3. As a City of Sanctuary, Oxford City Council has a responsibility to act in a manner that promotes the safety, security and well-being of sanctuary seekers.
4. As an aspiring County of Sanctuary, Oxfordshire County Council has a responsibility to act in a manner that promotes the safety, security and well-being of sanctuary seekers.

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23116955.kassam-stadium-hotel-used-house-refugee-sparking-row/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/33/section/95>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/183/oxford-city-council-makes-commitment-to-city-of-sanctuary-status>

¹¹¹ <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-is-a-county-of-sanctuary/#:~:text=Migrants%2C%20including%20refugees%20and%20asylum,as%20a%20place%20of%20sanctuary>

¹¹² https://helenbamber.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Suffering%20and%20squalor_Final_June%202024.pdf; <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Hostile-Accommodation-Refugee-Action-report.pdf>

¹¹³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx77z1d57ydo>

Council Resolves:

1. To request that the Leader of Oxford City Council write to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council asking for them to facilitate the use of all buses within the Oxford City area without cost for those seeking asylum.
2. To request that the Leader of Oxford City Council issue a public statement supporting the provision of free bus travel to all asylum seekers residing within the City limits.
3. To publicly record the Council's support for the provision of free bus travel to all asylum seekers within Oxford City for all asylum seekers residing within Oxford City.
4. To request that the Leader of Oxford City Council write to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Secretary of State for Transport for the United Kingdom requesting the provision of free bus passes be provided for all asylum seekers resident in England, noting that transport for other parts of the UK is a devolved matter.

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