

County Council Tuesday, 9 July 2024

ADDENDA - Motions

14. Motion by Councillor Liz Brighthouse

This Council no longer has confidence in the Leader of the Council.

There have been repeated failures allied to a persistent sense that her administration refuses to engage in meaningful dialogue with elected members, trade unions, other Councils and public sector partners, as well as the residents, businesses and community groups that are increasingly subjected to decisions taken by the minority administration in the Council's name.

This Council records its particular failure to:

1. Keep members and parents abreast of improvements to its SEND provision following last year's Ofsted-CQC determination;
2. Its stance towards the Housing Infrastructure and Growth ('HIF') deals that have eventuated in an expensive and unnecessary public enquiry; and
3. Its perceived conflict of interest on the lease of 'the Triangle' to OUFC.

The Council is extremely concerned by the view of the Leader that there has "been enough consultation" regarding major transport changes in Central Oxfordshire. Public consent for these schemes is absolutely essential. This requires an inclusive process to engage residents on congestion, including a Citizens Assembly, to inform future changes.

Where concerns have been raised in connection with delivering the democratically agreed 2024/25 budget, upholding the code of conduct, a failure to maintain cabinet responsibility, protecting the spare seats scheme, processing EHCPs and cuts to Autism Family Support over the last 12 months, the administration has been far too ready to engage in deflection tactics and victim-blaming, rather than engage with solutions.

This Council resolves that the current Leader of the Council is removed.

15. Motion by Councillor Ian Middleton

Many people in Oxfordshire who live in flood prone areas watch the skies with trepidation. In some communities even moderate amounts of sustained rainfall can cause significant flooding that overwhelms outdated flood relief infrastructure. This is often poorly maintained and constructed with no central plan for water management.

Sewers are also regularly overwhelmed with infiltration from surface water, causing sewage to leak: putting public health at risk as well as properties.

As the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), the Council has a responsibility to respond to these risks and work with other local authorities to develop flood management plans. We also assess how any new developments will impact on flood prone areas. That role is now more crucial as climate change increases the likelihood and frequency of heavy downpours and flooding across the county.

In the face of these urgent pressures, our powers of intervention are limited by out of date and inadequate guidelines set by central government. These include developers only having to prove that they won't make flooding worse, rather than helping to alleviate the problem in known flood risk areas.

Council calls on the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and other responsible agencies to work with us to :

1. Urgently review national planning guidance and legislation on flood prevention.
2. Provide more powers to LLFAs to prevent or limit developments in known flood risk areas
3. Require developers to contribute to reducing existing risks in flood prone areas as part of any new development.

16. Motion by Councillor Sally Povolotsky

This council notes that:

- Thames Water (TW) has been releasing untreated sewage into Oxfordshire rivers and chalk streams for 20+ years.
- TW's sewerage service is beyond inadequate. With illnesses on the rise, bringing serious risk of death, administrative change is needed, these failures are a public health issue.
- TW is not sustainable without direct intervention and renationalisation by government.
- TW's request to increase consumer bills at 44% over the next 5 years is extortion and a clear show of poor business management after decades of collecting payments and connection fees and neglecting to use them to maintain and improve the network.
- TW's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) isn't fit for purpose and needs urgent scrutiny by this government and the regulator.

This council resolves that:

- This chamber, its members and residents have no confidence in Thames Water's competence as a sewerage undertaker or maintainer of infrastructure for the current and growing population of this county.
- Requests the Leader writes to the Secretary of State (DEFRA), urging His Majesty's Government to urgently place full regulatory and administrative limits on Thames Water, suspending bonuses, bringing charges for polluting the eco system and urgently evaluate

the pros and cons of the renationalisation of Thames Water. We call for an urgent public inquiry into the WRMP 2024.

- This council reaffirms its objection to the design for SESRO (South East Strategic Reservoir Option) given the ambiguity of the costs, environmental and human impacts to this county.

17. Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves

This Council has not historically run its Spare Seats scheme for school bus places in an optimal way. Parents and carers have too often been left in an unenviable position further to changes, with elected members often left in the dark about changes affecting schools in their divisions.

According to the Oxford Mail (22 May 2024), there is a record low number of buses and coaches being used on Oxfordshire's roads.

Parental choice remains an important principle of the current education settlement and will remain so unless changed by an incoming government. Whilst such a principle remains, it is important that this Council does all it can to facilitate transport to preferred schools at a reasonable cost or on a revenue-neutral basis.

The Council's Spare Seats scheme has aimed to do just this. However, there appears to be increasing uncertainty as to whether it will continue in the same form. Indeed, letters to parents from this Council cancelling services have been sent as recently as 11 June 2024.

The Council requests a briefing for elected members on the current Spare Seats settlement and requests that the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member(s) bring a report to Cabinet (such report being subject to pre-scrutiny) to address how existing numbers of school bus places can be maintained and, where possible, increased. In the meantime, this Council requests Cabinet to work with parents, schools and bus companies to ensure continuing provision of affordable school bus places.

18. Motion by Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak

In December Oxfordshire County Council removed 7 beds from the Chiltern care home. These beds were removed without any consultation with the GP's who run them, Henley Town Council and the community of South Oxfordshire and Henley. This lack of consultation by the Council is unacceptable.

These beds were originally provided as NHS beds.

Following FOI requests to the Integrated Care Board Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West (ICB BOB) and the Council we have firmly established that these beds are NHS Beds funded by ICB, the Council and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and cannot be closed without consultation.

Dr Broughton interim Chief Executive of the ICB BOB states 28th February 2024

"The beds have not 'lost NHS funding', "The beds continued to be overseen by the Oxford University Hospital Hub team."

These beds are NHS beds which cannot be removed without consultation.

This Council:

1. Deplores the removal without consultation
2. Believes these beds which serve a population of 140,000 of South Oxfordshire should be reinstated.

This Council requests that Cabinet:

3. Asks partners to seek to reinstate the 7 Chiltern Court Beds serving South Oxfordshire.
4. Conduct a consultation if they still wish to remove the beds.

19. Motion by Councillor Mark Cherry

Council requests Cabinet to consider approving the Councils for Fair Tax declaration.

This commits Councils to

- Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
- Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
- Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
- Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
- Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers, UK and overseas, and their consolidated profit & loss position, given lack of clarity could be strong indicators of poor financial probity and weak financial standing.
- Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
- Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses that are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.

Council also requests the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer supporting calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

20. Motion by Councillor Charlie Hicks

This Council believes that:

1. The Council needs to do more to increase public involvement of Oxfordshire communities on decisions around the future of transport. Too many residents feel that their views and experiences have been ignored.

2. To bring the public into the room, we need a public deliberative process to empower residents to shape the future of transport in Oxfordshire. This is now possible thanks to the 2024/25 budget amendment by Oxfordshire Labour.

Council requests Cabinet to:

3. Deliver a Citizens' Panel, made up of a representative group of local people, picked by an independent organisation using a fair and transparent process, to be a direct public accountability function to the Cabinet for the traffic filter trial. The Panel should first meet before the traffic filters are implemented and again multiple times through the traffic filter Experimental Traffic Regulation Order trial period, conducting a deliberative process with input from a range of stakeholders. It should be focused on whether the traffic filter trial is working and should make recommendations to Cabinet on what changes should be made during the trial, whether the filters should be made permanent or not, and next steps regarding "core schemes".

This process will ensure that the lived experiences of residents are directly factored into future decisions about the traffic filters. To bring the whole public along with the process, it should be publicised widely (e.g. via Youtube) and the wider public should have the ability to provide input.

21. Motion by Councillor Sally Povolotsky

In September 2023, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission declared their judgment post inspection that the Local Area Partnership (LAP) had multiple systemic failures.

Despite the Priority Action Plan (PAP), the Council is failing to meaningfully engage with and capture the voice of the user, our young people.

Council calls on Cabinet to consider;

1. Meaningfully involving young people and youth organisations throughout all policy-making processes within SEND improvement and the PAP. Co-management and co-creation structures are the best way to ensure direct participation.
2. Any consultations or engagement with young people by this council must have a visible public follow-up to the outcomes.
3. All Council policies and frameworks that affect young people, must include an impact assessment, and ensure there are mitigation measures in place for those youth groups that might be negatively impacted by a new policy or framework.
4. Ensuring all future events, in person/online, run by or funded by OCC, especially those related to the PAP, LAP, and SEND improvement, are open to all young people with the attendance of their parent or carer.
5. Launching a rapid task force for the voice of the young person and SEND users, and task them to create a framework for a Youth Forum within 3 months of this meeting date.
6. The leader to appoint a SEND Champion to enable seldom heard voices in the SEND community to feed into SEND improvement and services, and that person to sit on the SEND Improvement board.

22. Motion by Councillor Freddie van Mierlo

The adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan aims to make walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. The Director of Public Health's Annual Report states such initiatives have benefits for both physical and mental health – directly through increased physical activity and indirectly through cleaner, less polluted air.

To achieve this important shift, walking and cycling must be made safer. In January 2022, the government introduced new rules on the 'hierarchy of road users', clarifying that pedestrians and cyclists going straight ahead at a junction have priority over traffic waiting to turn into or out of a side road, unless road signs or markings indicate otherwise.

Unfortunately, no funds were given to implement these new rules and few alterations have been made to the road network to reflect these changes on our roads in the past year and a half. This council resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Transport Management, in conjunction with the Director of Highways and Operations, to consider the formulation of a plan to gradually migrate the signs and lines to mirror the new guidance at the same time that regular planned line refreshes are taking place.

23. Motion by Councillor Ian Middleton

In 2018 this council passed a motion stating that it was opposed to the licensing of a badger cull in Oxfordshire.

When DEFRA announced that badger culling would be phased out by 2025, many people believed that the cull had ended. Sadly, culling in Oxfordshire intensified, seemingly with the intent of shooting as many badgers as possible before the deadline. Over 50% of the county is in the killing zones.

A new DEFRA policy now allows epidemiological culling or 'epi-culling', which involves killing up to 100% of badgers across a large area in response to a new cluster of herd breakdowns. Epi-Culling was first introduced in Cumbria, and has been adopted on a trial basis in parts of England over the past five years. Oxfordshire is now being considered by DEFRA for future epi-culling programmes.

A recent scientific report shows that epi-culling is ineffective as a control measure. However, DEFRA, Animal and Public Health Agenda, the bTB Hub/NFU and British Cattle Veterinary Association, continue to advocate its use.

This council therefore :

1. Re-affirms our opposition to badger culling and condemns the introduction of epidemiological culling which has been shown to be an ineffective control measure for bTB.
2. Asks the cabinet to consider a specific policy that badger culling will not be permitted on council owned land.
3. Requests that the leader writes to DEFRA making clear our continued opposition to the cull and any extension of it in size and scope, especially with regard to epidemiological culling.

24. Motion by Councillor Eddie Reeves

This Council considered setting up a Congestion Commission as part of its last budget debate. This measure was not taken up at the time. However, this Council now considers that it is time for such commission to be established.

This Council notes that its ambitious suite of traffic management measures is due to be rolled out, in large measure, before the next set of elections to Oxfordshire County Council in May 2025. These include Oxford's traffic filters and workplace parking tax, which are now largely enshrined in the Council's budget and will take place unless there is a change of administration next year.

If all such measures go ahead, Oxfordshire motorists could be hit by £57million in fines and charges over a five-year period broken down as follows:

- Expanded Zero Emissions Zone £25m;
- Traffic Filters (Four-sector Plan) £11m;
- Workplace Parking Tax £21m.

For clarity, the purpose of a Congestion Commission is not to water down or frustrate the administration's policies, for which there is budgetary provision. Rather, its object would be to assess the likely effectiveness of such measures and advise as to whether other measures might be given effect after next year's local elections as supplements or substitutes for such policies.

In resolving to request Cabinet to establish a Congestion Commission, this Council envisages that it would comprise elected members, local businesspeople, public sector leaders from the Council's health, education and blue light partners, civil society and faith group leaders, and academics with relevant expertise in the field.

25. Motion by Councillor Kieron Mallon

This Council regrets that it has not historically managed the expenditure of section 106 and associated development agreements well.

Too often, monies destined for local facilities have been left dormant, with members and parish council colleagues being forced to make circuitous enquiries of Council officers and/or developers to ascertain the correct position in respect of funds, which have been allocated to local communities and yet have not been spent.

Following work undertaken by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee and elsewhere at the Council's 'Localities' meetings, it has been suggested that as much as £278 million of public money has been unspent on improving local facilities.

This Council requests Cabinet to ensure that there is regular reporting of unspent development monies at all Localities meetings (such frequency to be determined by the relevant Chair) and requests that the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member produce a

report for the Council's next appropriate Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings as to how such funds are to be more effectively spent.

26. Motion by Councillor Donna Ford

Councillors note the increasing number of vacant bank and building society buildings on our high streets, which are largely the result of technological change. The loss of community banking services is of concern to many residents, especially older constituents and those with disabilities and adaptive needs.

Buckinghamshire Council has set up a Banking Hub in Buckingham library for people to access banking services in the town centre.

Established in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council through its Buckingham and Villages Community Board, with the support of Buckingham Town Council and community representatives, the temporary Banking Hub provides local people with access to banking services. This offers a counter service operated by the Post Office, where customers of all major banks and building societies can carry out regular cash transactions. It also offers a Community Banker service where customers can talk to their banking provider about more complicated issues. Community Bankers work on rotation, with a different bank or building society available on each day of the week, to ensure fair and equitable access to major banking and building society customers.

Council requests the relevant Cabinet member for Community and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Finance to take a lead from forward-thinking colleagues at Buckinghamshire Council and, working with its Town Council, and District Council partners, invite banks and building societies that have left – or are due to leave – our high streets to explore opportunities to work with this Council to set up similar banking hubs within appropriate Council libraries.

27. Motion by Councillor Ian Snowdon

This Council recognises that the voice of small and medium-sized enterprises ('SMEs'), social enterprises and co-operatives have, too often, been overlooked.

This Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council to appoint a Small Business & Social Enterprise Champion to provide a single point of contact for local businesspeople, directors of social enterprises and co-operative workers, and advise members attending Cabinet and relevant scrutiny committees of the impact of Council policies on such organisations, which are the lifeblood of our local economy.

28. Motion by Councillor Pete Sudbury

Last year, this council unanimously agreed a motion committing to "meet the needs of today without compromising the wellbeing of future generations".

We recognise that we are currently failing that by adding to accumulated harms from legacy climate pollution, which already vastly overshoots safe limits. That overshoot has doubled in the last 15 years.

We note “baked in” consequent economic damages of at least 20% of global GDP by 2050.

We note all reputable scientific/ energy industry bodies recognise the need for "negative emissions"; sequestering more CO₂ than emitted, at multiple billions of tonnes annually from the late 2030s.

We regret the unavoidable additional negative impact on future generations’ wellbeing of the requirement to finance this removal of our waste and we are alarmed at the lack of credible plans to build up the required technologies to the level of sequestration required, partly due to lack of current demand.

We agree it is unacceptable potentially to leave our children and grandchildren with an impossible, unaffordable task to avoid a ghastly future.

We therefore request Cabinet to:

1. Promoting local R&D and commercialisation of emerging negative emission technologies (NETs).
2. Going beyond net zero, into negative emissions on our own account, at the earliest reasonable opportunity, in ways that have local environmental/ economic benefit or contribute to scaling up NETs.
3. Working with our partners, suppliers and our networks to build a significant level of "demand pull", further stimulating the growth of NET supply chains.

29. Motion by Councillor Ian Corkin

At the recent excellent “Better Together” conference, organised by Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum, many parents described feeling isolated and abandoned as they tried to navigate the special needs jungle. In truth, many of the challenges were similar, but each felt that they were the first people to face them. They described feeling alone, anxious and abandoned as they tried to make sense of a highly complex system, and that while the various stakeholders had their own priorities, no one was advocating just for them.

Equally striking at the conference were the many voluntary and third sector organisations who can be that advocate. However, one parent talked about trying to match her child’s specific needs with the multiplicity of support as like “playing 3D chess when you are exhausted”.

Despite it being a statutory requirement, parents were critical of OCC’s offering; in particular, the layout and format have not been optimised, some information is missing and the search criteria are inadequate leading to hundreds of results or none.

Recognising the importance of this resource to service users, this council requests Cabinet to:

- Carry out an urgent review of best practice in curating and promoting the local offering
- To work with the voluntary and third sector to ensure they have comprehensive and up to date data
- To work with users to co-design a site that is accessible to its target audience

- Put advocating for the parent/carers at the heart of the new design, so no parent has to feel abandoned.