



Council

Monday 21 October 2019

Agenda Item 9, Motions

Motion Proposer: Councillor Barry Wood

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Oxcam Expressway

Motion

The Council notes that clarity on potential routes is due.

The Council therefore requests Officers to then assess the implications for Cherwell and the Oxon 2050 Plan and to provide recommendations for Members via Scrutiny and the Executive. In the meantime, the Council will maintain an open mind.

Motion Proposer: Councillor Katherine Tyson

Motion Seconder: Councillor Conrad Copeland

Topic: Oxford-Cambridge Expressway Motion: to oppose the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway while supporting rail connectivity

Motion

Council notes that, given all possible routes through the government's chosen corridor, the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway will have a direct impact on communities, businesses, and the environment across the south of Cherwell District. This council should therefore agree a position on this matter.

Council notes with concern the lack of public consultation and lack of clarity from Government on proposals about whether an Expressway is the most effective way to enhance connectivity within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

Council notes that published evidence on similar road building schemes, such as widening the M25, led to increased car and lorry use without any benefit in terms of congestion or journey time.

Council notes that the increased carbon emissions, damage to our countryside and biodiversity associated with road building would be significant.

Council notes our recent declaration of a Climate Emergency, and our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint through our policies, decisions and actions needs to be recognized with regards to the Expressway. The Expressway will have a serious negative impact on the achievement of climate change targets at a time when all public bodies are being actively encouraged to improve air quality and contribute to significant carbon reductions.

Therefore, Council resolves to oppose the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway while supporting the development of rail connectivity.

Council requests that the leader of the council, and members of the Executive, make our opposition to the road building scheme clear at relevant partnership meetings.

Council requests that the leader of the council write to Members of Parliament and to the Minister for Transport to make clear this council's position, as set out above, and to request that the following actions be taken:

- That the Expressway road proposal be abandoned;
- That the estimated £3-7billion cost of the scheme to be invested instead into completing and enhancing phase three of the East-West Rail link and to local government to enhance cycle infrastructure and public transport;
- That all new transport schemes proposed by Department for Transport be subject to full public consultation and environmental assessments be published from the beginning;
- That the government prioritise rail and sustainable active travel when developing policy and awarding grant funding for infrastructure

Motion Proposer: Councillor Andrew McHugh

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Horton General Hospital

Motion

This Council deplores the decision of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group ('CCG') on 26 September to downgrade maternity provision at the Horton General Hospital to a midwife-led unit for the foreseeable future.

The decision follows public consultation and evidence-gathering exercises in which neither the public, nor this Council, have confidence. Public trust in the CCG and in Oxfordshire University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust ('OUHFT') was damaged when the temporary downgrade was enforced, without consultation, in August 2016 and has since been further eroded by the persistent lack of meaningful engagement, which speaks to their Oxford-centric agenda.

Council endorses the recent conclusions of the Horton Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee ('Horton HOSC'), in bringing OUHFT and CCG shortcomings

to the fore and resolves to fully support Horton HOSC's efforts to continue to hold the CCG and OUHFT to account and pursue an appropriate course of action.

This Council recognises the vital importance of the Horton General Hospital in providing first-class care to patients across Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire and welcomes the commitment from OUHFT and the CCG to invest significantly in the Horton site. After years of talk and hollow promises, now is the time for action and that commitment needs to be tangibly demonstrated. Council also notes the pledge of OUHFT and the CCG to "regularly review" the viability of reinstating an obstetric-led maternity unit in Banbury. The real-life birthing experiences of local mothers cannot continue to be overlooked and Council will do all it can to ensure their voices are heard.

Motion Proposer: Councillor Ian Middleton

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Oxfordshire Pension Fund Divestment: to call on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to divest from non-renewable energy and explore reinvestment in renewable energy companies

Motion

As council is no doubt aware, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last year warned that to avoid the most catastrophic consequences of global warming, carbon emissions must fall to zero by 2050. As a result, Parliament has imposed a binding target of net zero by 2050, and in July this Council declared a Climate Emergency.

The Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Fund (OLGPS), which this council contributes to, has more than £132m of local council workers' money invested in fossil fuel companies. These investments are described by The London Stock Exchange as "non-renewables" and represent around 6% of the Oxfordshire LGPS total portfolio funds.

Fossil fuels are the primary drivers of the climate crisis threatening our planet and support for such investments are contrary to the council's stated aim of becoming a net zero carbon producer by 2030. Whilst fossil fuel companies have made speculative noises about reducing output, research by industry experts have found that none of the ten largest publicly listed oil and gas producers are on track to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Lloyds of London and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney have both warned that legislation necessary to limit warming combined with the development of renewables would mean that fossil fuel assets could result in large-scale asset write-downs. These companies face a potential wave of third-party liability claims brought by the victims of climate change, including from sovereign states.

As a result, a growing number of investment funds have already announced plans to fully or partially divest from fossil fuels. These include councils such as

Southwark, Islington, and South Oxfordshire as well as the United Reform Church, The Church of England, the National Trust and many others. Globally, £6.3 trillion has now been removed from funds supporting fossil fuels and the industry now faces serious financial, legal and regulatory challenges.

The OLGPS has defended its continued investment in fossil fuels, arguing that to divest would mean losing its influence. This makes no sense. The strongest form of positive influence that can be exerted on these companies is the reduction in available financial support to continue exploiting carbon generating fuels.

The continued use of fossil fuels threatens our planet and its most vulnerable inhabitants through droughts, heat waves, crop failures, floods, and rising sea levels. Every climate change expert says that the only way to avoid climate catastrophe is to leave fossil fuels in the ground. Divestment from such activities must therefore be a priority for any organisation declaring a climate emergency.

As one of the OLGPS employers, Cherwell District Council calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Committee to act in line with this council's declaration of Climate Emergency and with prudent exercise of its fiduciary duties by divesting its investment in an industry whose long-term risk profile in the current political and environmental climate is unacceptably high.

Council therefore:

- 1) Asks the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to acknowledge that shareholder engagement has failed to bring about the pace of change required to limit catastrophic global warming.
- 2) Calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to follow the lead of Councils, sovereign wealth funds and other pension and investment funds around the world to divest from non-renewable energy companies or any organisation whose main purpose is the exploration and/or extraction of fossil fuels.
- 3) Calls on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to explore reinvestment of its funds into appropriate renewable energy companies at the earliest opportunity.