



Council

Monday 16 December 2019

Agenda Item 9 (a), Written Questions¹

Question From: Councillor Mark Cherry

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood

Topic: Bradley Arcade, Bretch Hill

Question

“Would the leader of Cherwell District Council inform Ruscote ward councillors what plans do Cherwell District Council have to fill the empty spaces left at Bradley Arcade, Bretch Hill. When the new build Hill community fully centre opens whilst noting the Pizza shop at Bradley arcade has also been shut for some weeks.”

Question From: Councillor Conrad Copeland

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood

Topic: Communication with MHCLG

Question

“Has any member formally acting on behalf of Cherwell District Council, or any officer authorised to represent the Council, spoken with MHCLG officials, ministers, or the Secretary of State regarding the holding decision that currently applies to South Oxfordshire District Council and what was the subject matter of those discussions.”

Question From: Councillor Ian Middleton

Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood

Topic: Oxfordshire Pension Fund Motion to July Council

¹ Updated 10 December 2019 with two questions submitted by the deadline but after agenda publication



Question

“At the last full council meeting, I and my group brought a motion calling on this council to press the Oxfordshire Pension Fund to divest funds from fossil fuel investments in view of our adoption of a climate change emergency motion. This motion fell.

I understand that a Climate Change Workshop was subsequently held on 8th November to discuss how the Oxfordshire Pension Fund could play a part in tackling the climate crisis, during which the Oxfordshire Pension Fund committee suggested that it was ready to move more of its assets into carbon-emission friendly funds at its next asset allocation meeting.

The meeting included the Oxfordshire Pension Fund committee and board members, senior Brunel Pension Partnership executives, fund managers with expertise in low carbon funds, a leading climate scientist, an Oxford University student climate campaign representative, Oxfordshire District councillors holding senior environment positions, and members of the Fossil Free Oxfordshire group. All participants agreed that the Pension Fund should support the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees. Moreover, the fund management representatives who spoke at the workshop assured participants that Pension Fund performance would not be affected if assets were transferred into zero or low carbon investment funds. Indeed, they argued that a move away from fossil fuels could be a source of superior Pension Fund returns.

These were exactly the arguments that I and my colleagues, including professional economist Cllr Copeland, made during the debate on our motion. Yet we were told by Conservative members that we were completely wrong, before every single one of them voted against the motion.

Would the leader now like to take the opportunity to express agreement with the Oxfordshire Pension Fund that divestment is in fact a prudent move, in terms of the future health of the fund and the planet, and that the arguments advanced by myself and the Progressive Oxfordshire Group during the motion debate supporting divestment should have been taken more seriously at the time?”