

Council

Monday 21 October 2024

Motions

Topic	Proposer	Seconder
Winter Fuel Payments	Cllr Eddie Reeves	TBC
Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023	Cllr Andrew McHugh	TBC
'Primary Care' health services across North Oxfordshire	Cllr David Rogers	TBC
Neurodiversity	Cllr Rebecca Biegel	TBC
Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre, Kidlington	Cllr Ian Middleton	Cllr Dorothy Walker

Motion Proposer: Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Winter Fuel Payments

Motion

"This Council deplores the government's precipitous decision to cut Winter Fuel Payments (WFPs) ahead of its budget on 30 October 2024.

Age UK estimates that the government's changes to WFPs could adversely affect as many as two million pensioners across the country, many of whom need support to stay warm this winter. In the Banbury constituency alone, 17,638 pensioners are set to be affected by the decision.

This Council resolves to request that:

- (i) the Executive launch a countywide awareness campaign working with our fellow City and District Councils, Oxfordshire County Council, local NHS partners, and charitable, civic and religious groups, to encourage elderly residents who are eligible for means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit to register and claim them to ensure that they continue to receive WFPs this Winter;

- (ii) the Leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the government's decision to means-test WFPs without public consultation and asking HM Treasury to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who are eligible for, but who do not – or cannot – claim, other benefits under current thresholds are protected from fuel poverty in her forthcoming budget; and
- (iii) the Executive builds on the Council's notable successes in tackling food insecurity and providing community food grants by prioritising monies within its current and/or the 2025/6 budget to ensure that pensioners who are in genuine hardship, but who are not otherwise eligible for other government support, are helped through the Winter."

Motion Proposer: Councillor Andrew McHugh

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023

Motion

"This Council proudly holds the silver level award for the Defence Employers' Recognition Scheme, known as the Armed Forces Covenant.

In this year's King's Speech, the Prime Minister set out measures to repeal and replace the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 ('the Act'). The Act afforded members of British Armed Forces who served in Northern Ireland the same protection from prosecution as that given to convicted terrorists and those on the run.

Protection from prosecution was granted to convicted terrorists and 'on the run' terrorists by former Prime Minister Tony Blair and then-Director of Public Prosecutions Sir Keir Starmer under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

In interviews given by Sir Keir Starmer prior to the General Election, he made it clear that he does not believe British Service personnel should have immunity for prosecution and that convicted and 'on the run' paramilitaries should continue to enjoy this protection as the cost of a lasting peace.

The repeal of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 is a betrayal to British Armed Forces Veterans who saw active service during Operation Banner.

As a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant, this Council calls on the Leader of the council to write to the Prime Minister asking him to reconsider his commitment to repealing the Act or to replace it with another that gives British Armed Forces veterans equal degree of protection from prosecution related to the Troubles as that enjoyed by their terrorist/paramilitary adversaries."

Motion Proposer: Councillor David Rogers

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: 'Primary Care' health services across North Oxfordshire

Motion

"This Council recognises the need to improve 'Primary Care' health services across North Oxfordshire.

Primary Care expansion is the remit of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System Board ('BOBICS') whose Primary Care Estates Strategy acknowledges the scale of developer contributions that are available to support such vital public services.

Regrettably, since the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document in 2018, it is estimated that only 15% of funds available have been requested and secured within the Cherwell District Council area. This must improve.

Accordingly, this Council request that its Leader writes to the Chief Executive of BOBICS, copied to its Place Director for Oxfordshire and its Senior Primary Care Estate Manager, to request that it:

- (i) more consistently requests developer contributions on all planning applications of 10 or more dwellings;
- (ii) considers using this funding in part for ICT Infrastructure to support primary care expansion;
- (iii) work more closely with this Council to ensure the release the s.106 contributions currently allocated to, or held by, Cherwell District Council; and
- (iv) works with this Council on both its Local Plan review, the Community Infrastructure Levy consultation and its review of the Supplementary Planning Document to ensure better and more coordinated provision of vital health services.

This Council further calls on its Leader to request a meeting between BOBICS and Leaders of all political groups and Officers to discuss how we could improve the delivery of Primary Care across North Oxfordshire."

Motion Proposer: Councillor Rebecca Biegel

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Neurodiversity

Motion

“Around 1-in-7 people in the UK are neurodivergent, experiencing the world differently from others. Neurodivergence is associated with a range of conditions including, but not limited to ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Developmental Language Disorder, Dyspraxia, and Dyscalculia.

People with neurodivergent traits and conditions face a range of challenges across our society, including finding employment, increased likelihood of mental health diagnoses, and trouble accessing public services.

I hope Members will agree that we should act to reduce barriers faced by neurodivergent individuals to make Cherwell more neurodiversity friendly.

To meet this aim, this Council resolves to ask the Executive to:

- add neurodiversity within 12 months as part of EDI strategy/plan that ensures our organisation and services identify and meet the needs of the neurodiverse community.
- Promote acceptance and understanding of neurodiversity through celebrating awareness-raising campaigns.
- Look at training for all on neurodiversity so they may recognise the growing impact of neurodivergent conditions on the issues they deal with on behalf of service users / constituents.
- Ensure neurodiversity is considered within the Council’s well-being goals and strategy.
- Encourage neurodivergent individuals to apply for employment with the council or participate in public life, for example by running to be a Councillor.
- Review and implement reasonable adjustments for elected members, to ensure the role of Councillor is accessible to people with neurodivergent traits and conditions so the skills and talents of all people can be harnessed for the benefit of the residents of Cherwell.
- And finally, for inclusivity, to extend any reasonable adjustments more widely.

Motion Proposer: Councillor Ian Middleton

Motion Seconder: Councillor Dorothy Walker

Topic: Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre, Kidlington

Motion

“Campsfield House Immigration Detention Centre in Kidlington was closed in 2019 after decades of campaigning by refugee support groups and Cherwell residents, and the publication of two government commissioned reviews criticising the UK’s migrant detention system. The leader of the reviews, the Prison Ombudsman, Sir Stephen Shaw, described the detention system as indiscriminate, inhumane and hugely wasteful.

In 2022 the Conservatives announced plans to re-open and double the size of Campsfield House to support its Rwanda Resettlement Scheme. The new Labour government have thankfully cancelled that scheme, removing the main rationale for the plans for Campsfield, but they have since announced their intention to continue with the re-opening. This has been criticised by migrants’ rights groups including Asylum Welcome, Detention Action, The Refugee Council, Amnesty International UK and the Keep Campsfield Closed group.

Cherwell has a proud tradition of welcoming refugees and providing sanctuary from oppression and war. The re-opening of Campsfield House is a stain on our district and contradicts government recommendations into migrant detention in the UK.

Council therefore requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary calling on her to :

1. Abandon the re-opening of Campsfield House.
2. Outline plans to reduce, rather than increase, the number of people held in detention.
3. Focus on accelerating the processing of asylum claims to reduce the huge number of individuals trapped in the system.
4. Develop a more humane migration policy, including the establishment of safe and legal routes for people to claim asylum.!