

Council

Monday 18 December

Motions

Topic	Proposer	Seconded
Solar Energy Strategy	Councillor Dorothy Walker	TBC
Right to Grow	Councillor Ian Middleton	TBC
Period Poverty	Councillor Rebecca Biegel	TBC
Section 21 Notices	Councillor Sean Woodcock	TBC
Service Hubs	Councillor Chris Pruden	Councillor Rob Pattenden

(for ease, the text for each motion is on a separate page)

Motion Proposer: Councillor Dorothy Walker

Motion Seconded: TBC

Topic: Solar Energy Strategy

Motion

“Increasing our renewable energy production by wind or solar is vital – yet there is an inconsistency of approach in Cherwell. While wind projects and their suitability for Cherwell’s environment and community needs was independently researched in 2019 for the Local Plan Review, no equivalent independent research was undertaken for solar projects.

The pathway to the increase in solar generation is unclear. Requirements for solar panels on new domestic and commercial buildings are limited and there is no programme for the widespread retrofitting of photovoltaics on public, commercial and domestic properties, nor is there a comprehensive solar power plan integrating all means of solar power generation, only an apparent reliance on the emergence of commercial solar farm proposals. There has been a proliferation of solar farm projects in the district, and we currently face the potential construction (mainly in West Oxfordshire and partially in Cherwell) of the largest solar farm in Europe - and one of the largest in the world.

We ask the Executive to consider commissioning a robust, research-based strategy for solar electricity production in Cherwell, in order to achieve the optimum balance of power generation by solar farms, by roof panels on new commercial and residential developments, and, crucially, their retrofitting on existing public, business and domestic buildings. Two key criteria underpinning this solar power strategy should be environmental impacts and domestic food production needs.”

Motion Proposer: Councillor Ian Middleton

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Right to Grow

Motion

“The cost-of-living crisis has highlighted the need for access to enough fresh food, especially fruit and vegetables. This has been worsened by the lack of available allotments and communal gardens.

Greater access to growing spaces would better support CDC in ensuring it places the health and well-being of its residents at the heart of its policy making by increasing the availability of fresh locally produced food at an affordable price. Such initiatives can reduce pressures on NHS and social care whilst increasing community cohesion, tackling loneliness and isolation, and providing for the healthy food needs of their neighbourhoods.

We recognise that officers already work with our communities to encourage them to come together to develop local growing spaces in areas of under-used publicly owned land and that we have endorsed the countywide Food Strategy. But that we can always do more.

This council therefore calls on the Executive to,

1. Identify council owned land suitable for community cultivation and facilitate the production of a publicly available map of such sites.
2. Adopt a ‘Right to Grow’ policy whilst continuing to work with Cherwell Collective and other community organisations to encourage the adoption of such land for growing schemes by means of a simple licence at no direct cost to the community.
3. Consider ways to encourage developers to include community growing spaces in all new developments and, where practical, on land awaiting development.
4. Write to all Cherwell MPs asking them to support the national ‘Right to Grow’ campaign.”

Motion Proposer: Councillor Rebecca Biegel

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Period Poverty

Motion

“We have seen the cost of living crisis leave many of our residents with unacceptable choices between heating or eating.

However, the cost of living crisis has caused highlighted another crucial issue: period poverty. Many women and girls do not have access to sanitary products due to the rising cost of other essentials such as food and energy, which are necessarily being prioritised.

A poll by Action Aid in May 2023 showed that more than 21% or 1 in 5 women and people who menstruate are experiencing period poverty. Furthermore, the percentage of those affected has risen from 12% to 21% in just one year.

Being unable to comfortably leave home for several days every month due to lack of sanitary products is unbearable for the individuals and missing work or school has further financial or educational implications.

There are also serious health risks: 41% of respondents used sanitary products for much longer than recommended and 8% resorted to re-using disposal products. In addition to the physical dangers, the impact of shame and anxiety on mental health is significant.

I hope members will agree this situation is unacceptable in society and in our district.

To combat period poverty, this Council asks the Executive

- a) to investigate and report back on the number of accessible locations across the Council’s estate where free sanitary products can feasibly and sensitively be provided.
- b) to consider the report and the recommendations therein to make a decision on implementation.”

Motion Proposer: Councillor Sean Woodcock

Motion Seconder: TBC

Topic: Section 21 Notices

Motion

"This council is experiencing unprecedented levels of people presenting as homeless. A key driver of this is landlords serving Section 21, so-called 'no fault', eviction notices on their tenants.

Since 2019, the Conservative government has promised to abolish Section 21 notices and included this as part of its Private Renters Reform Bill. This has now been indefinitely delayed.

Only a year ago, this council overwhelmingly voted in favour of the government enacting the Private Renters Reform Bill; with the Lead Member for Housing mandated to write to the government to that effect.

This council condemns the decision to delay the ban on Section 21 notices and calls on the Leader of the Council to communicate this to our Member*s* of Parliament and the government in the strongest possible terms."

Motion Proposer: Councillor Chris Pruden

Motion Seconder: Councillor Rob Pattenden

Topic: Service Hubs

Motion

“This Council notes that over the last few years, in-person access to essential services has been greatly reduced, from banking services to our own council services, while residents are required to travel further or use online services, which in some cases is difficult or not suitable for the most vulnerable who need these services most. Banks alone have closed over 200 branches in the UK this year, with Banbury, Bicester, and Kidlington having already lost branches and/or the provision of counter service.

This Council believes it should do what it can to help maintain easy access to these vital services. Banking hubs have already been set up elsewhere and been proven to work. We could not only take a lesson from these, but seek to improve the hub concept by including access to services CDC itself provides, noting the closure of CDC counters.

This motion therefore calls on the Executive to:

1. Investigate the feasibility of creating service hubs within our localities and what they can usefully provide, including considering best practice from other local authorities.
2. Develop a strategy that facilitates the use of service hubs to better provide access and support to our communities within our powers.”