

Oxfordshire County Council Annual Parish Report

2018/2019

A summary of key events during the past year

Introduction

As County Councillor, I represent Chalgrove and Watlington Division, which is made up of some fifteen parishes across South East Oxfordshire. It is my pleasure to present this report to you and if there is anything I can help with, all my contact details are on the OCC website. In addition to representing the interests of residents in this Division and my place on Full Council, I am Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services and, in this capacity, chair a number of related committees.

Unitary Government

A proposal for Unitary Government for Oxfordshire was submitted to DCLG in the Spring of 2017 by OCC, SODC and The Vale. Cherwell, WODC and the City of Oxford did not take part. There is no update on the situation.

Council Budget Passed on 12th February

1. COMMUNITIES TO BE OFFERED HELP WITH YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Provision across Oxfordshire was given a £1 million boost by the Conservative Independent Alliance at the budget-setting meeting on February 12th. Young people and their families in Oxfordshire will now benefit from improved community-run youth services. Youth groups will be invited to bid in to a £1m fund over two years, with encouragement to find match-funding from their local communities. Details of the application process will be published shortly.

2. COUNTY COUNCIL TO INVEST IN SCHOOLS, TRANSPORT AND STREETLIGHTING

Other measures that form part of the approved Budget include highway improvements, new school buildings and energy-efficient street-lighting thanks to a £1 billion investment over the next ten years. However, the county council is also warning that funding pressure on services remains as demand for social care for vulnerable children and adults continues grow and continued financial prudence is required to meet those demands.

Transport schemes across the county will improve journeys for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Nearly £20m will be invested to increase the provision of school places for children with special needs in the county, including rebuilding Northfield School in Oxford with more pupil places.

Capital funding is for large one-off projects such as highway repairs or building work to assist the council meet its obligations, such as creating extra school places – as opposed to the

normal revenue budget which covers funding for the costs of day-to-day services. Most of the funding for capital programme is made up of government funding and developer contributions, which cannot be used for any other purpose.

The capital programme includes a £41m street-lighting improvement programme with traditional lanterns being replaced with more energy efficient LED lighting, saving money in the long-run.

Pressure on funding for day-to-day council services continues as the council increases funding to support of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children and adults. To make sure the growing number of children at risk of abuse and neglect are protected, the children's social care budget has increased annually. It was £46m in 2011 and is forecast to be £95m in 2022/23 – more than doubling in ten years. The council's budget for adult social care will increase by £5m in 2019/20, with further annual increases reaching nearly £6m by 2022/23.

The planned redesign of the council around the changing needs of residents and communities will maintain or improve services, with investment in digital technology enabling us to save money in the process – OCC is now reviewing the digital technology needed to make the council run more effectively and efficiently, including improving customer service by making it easier to access services online. The council has identified savings of £50m from changing the way services are delivered and has already started implementing these changes, including improving online 'self-service' HR and finance systems used by staff. As part of the partnership with Cherwell District Council, legal services for the two councils are being joined up.

Investment in Repairing Oxfordshire's Roads Continues

OCC will be spending an extra £13m on capital funding on road maintenance in the coming financial year. This is on top of its existing £18.5m programme of work and follows last year's additional £12m boost which saw more than 37 extra miles of road being resurfaced through a range of methods including surface dressing and micro-asphalting – both of which make road surfaces waterproof and extend their life. This year's additional money will be spent across Oxfordshire on resurfacing, drainage, bridge repairs and footways. One of the major projects confirmed for later this year will see the A40 from Thornhill to Headington Roundabout (inbound) resurfaced, benefitting thousands of road users every day.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire Publishes Findings of Daytime Support Review

OCC's Adult Social Care department asked the health and social care watchdog to undertake an independent review of the services after major changes in how they were delivered in October 2017. On that date, OCC's Health and Wellbeing Centres and Learning Disability Daytime Support Services were replaced with a new Community Support Service as planned, securing the services for the future. The services are located in Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Oxford, Wallingford, Wantage and Witney. They provide daytime support for both older people and those with learning disabilities. The review focused specifically on user experiences during the process of change to help evaluate the impact it had on people. The service has been working hard since the launch to ensure that people are at the centre of all service developments. The review found that people said that daytime support made a difference to their lives and they valued it for: social connection and friendships; meaningful activity; independence; reducing isolation and loneliness; and supporting carers to continue caring.

Delayed Transfer Of Care Improvements

The latest published figures on people who are unnecessarily in hospital while they await care have been published. The figures for December 2018 show that on average 85 Oxfordshire residents had their hospital discharge delayed. This is five fewer than in November and 20 less than the same time last year. Oxfordshire's improvement remains better than nationally. In the last 12 months delays have dropped by 19% locally compared to 11% nationally.

Response to Announcement on The Oxford-Cambridge Expressway

OCC welcomes the announcement of a preferred Corridor for part of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway as it offers a degree of clarity on where the final scheme would go but is very disappointed that access to the M40 through Oxfordshire is still unclear. Highways England, who are leading on this national project, have identified Corridor B as their proposal, the central corridor from the three broad corridors being considered. However, there is still no indication on which of the sub-options around Oxford would be taken forward. OCC will now carefully study the Corridor put forward, including the justification and technical detail which has led to this choice, and how it would affect already stretched roads, such as the A34 and interface with other schemes including East West Rail. OCC has set three tests to assess the decision-making process for that corridor and, eventually, the final route choice:

- Impact on the A34: it should provide relief to congestion on the A34 and function as a separate strategic route, allowing the A34 around Oxford to work better for local traffic
- Pressure on existing roads: It should not increase pressure on overstretched roads
- Conflation with other schemes: It should be developed separately but alongside other local schemes, to ensure the highway network works for Oxfordshire overall

Invariably, a project of this magnitude and ambition will have an impact, which OCC will need to ensure is mitigated. OCC will seek clarity on how the corridor choice is developed so that a decision can be made on the best route for the scheme.

Housing and Growth Deal Infrastructure Programme

The Oxfordshire Growth Board has published details of the infrastructure projects to receive funding in Year 1 and Years 2-5 of the Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal, signed in April 2018. The total £150 million of Growth Deal funding has been earmarked for specific projects. This forward funding is helping unlock projects that will benefit from developer contributions, delivering schemes valued at over £480 million in total, excluding costs of the major rail projects, which are still to be confirmed.

Councils Join Up to Produce a Spatial Plan For Oxfordshire up to 2050

Oxfordshire's councils are working jointly on a countywide strategic plan which integrates planning for growth and infrastructure, with a focus on quality of life and health and wellbeing. At the September meeting, Cabinet approved a scoping document for the creation of the joint strategic spatial plan (JSSP), which will be considered by the districts and city council in the coming weeks. The JSSP will address the strategic and cumulative implications of growth and set out a long-term framework covering the whole of Oxfordshire up to 2050. It will set out future housing requirements and identify strategic locations or broad areas for future growth. The JSSP will not allocate specific sites for development (any such decision to do this would require the explicit agreement of all the local authorities). Detailed local policies will be covered by

future Local Plan reviews as necessary. OCC's role as highways and education authority, and as a provider of many essential services to the communities and businesses, makes it particularly relevant as a key player in the JSSP preparation process. Sustainable transport that create places where people can walk and cycle will underpin the JSSP. The six Oxfordshire Councils and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OXLEP) under the Oxfordshire Growth Board agreed the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal with Government in March 2018. Under the terms of the Deal the local authorities have committed to producing the JSSP for submission to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination by 31 March 2020 and adoption by 31 March 2021. Early stakeholder engagement starts this Autumn and a public consultation is due in 2019 first on preferred options and then a proposed draft of the joint plan.

OCC Best Performing County Council in England for its Recycling Rates

Oxfordshire has been named the best performing county council waste disposal authority in England for its recycling rates during 2017/18. The success reflects OCC's commitment to work with districts to protect the environment. Figures published on Tuesday 11 December by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) show that Oxfordshire is the highest performing disposal authority, ahead of Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire.

Oxfordshire is 'top of the pops' in two categories:

- The highest proportion of waste which is reused, recycled and composted (57.2%)
- The lowest amount of general waste (non-recyclable waste) produced per household (430kg).

All Oxfordshire Councils recycled over 50% in 2017/18, (the national recycling rate is 45%). The county has seven Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) that provide recycling facilities for a wide range of items, from batteries to clothes, fridges to plastic garden furniture. They accept over 350 different waste streams, recycling around 60% of the waste accepted. For further information about Oxfordshire County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres, visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards



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Chalgrove & Watlington Division

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