

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS

FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

FEBRUARY 2015

NEW WAYS OF RUNNING LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT FRONT LINE SERVICES

Oxfordshire County Council continues to break new ground about how public services are run and will move to a new more networked management structure in the summer. The world of Local Government is changing. Oxfordshire County Council is now an enabler, commissioner and partner with fewer services being delivered in traditional ways. We increasingly work across boundaries in the public sector and join things up to benefit residents.

Chief Executive Role to be axed

Further modernisation is essential to protect front line services in the light of further likely cuts to local government funding after the General Election in May. The days of a traditional management hierarchy have gone. On 30th January it was announced that Chief Executive Joanna Simons will be standing down in June. She will not be replaced, and the roles of the Chief Executive will be devolved down the organisation.

During the life of the next parliament we will need a new way of working, building on the partnerships we have been developing over the last few years. This means:

- More **joint working** in all sorts of ways – in health and social care with the NHS, with schools in our Teaching Schools Alliance, our back office partnership with Hampshire and our new Tri-County arrangements for the economy with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire
- Going “**Digital by Default**” to make things easier for the public, and streamlining processes through “Lean” working as we have been doing in adult social care
- **Rationalising our office bases** with public sector partners, and rolling out agile working across the council
- Making the **best possible use of our contracts** and being more commercial in all we do

The Case for a Unitary Authority

The County Council Leader Ian Hudspeth recently launched a discussion document **Strategic Financial Case for a Unitary Council**. He wants to start the debate about how local government should be organised in Oxfordshire to simplify things for the public and save money for essential services. The report is attached.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/jan/new-ways-running-local-government-protect-frontline-services>

£108.6M GROWTH DEAL SIGNED

A £108.6m investment into Oxfordshire has been given the go-ahead with Minister Greg Clark MP signing a Local Growth Deal that will create 6000 jobs and 4000 homes across the county by 2021. The Minister for Universities, Science & Cities signed the Growth Deal today at the Abingdon campus of Abingdon & Witney College. Local MPs' and businesses joined the Local Enterprise Partnership Board (OxLEP) to take part in the signing ceremony.

£15.7million of investment has been confirmed for the first year commencing 2015/2016 with a further £92.9 million of commitment through to 2020/2021 which will be used for ten transport, infrastructure and skills projects throughout Oxfordshire and generate up to £208.5m in public and private investment.

The deal includes:

- Investment in substantial measures to **reduce the risk of flooding**, ensuring businesses continue to operate, roads and railways remain operational and people can be confident that their homes and businesses won't be damaged.
- Joint investment with the University of Oxford in a **new Centre for Applied Superconductivity** to bring university professors and entrepreneurs together to collaborate on exciting developments in fields as diverse as computing, cryogenics, x-rays and MRI scanning and electricity storage.
- Investment with the both City of Oxford College and Abingdon and Witney College in state-of-the-art skills centres enabling **local people to be trained in vital skills in science, engineering and technology**, preparing them for future employment.

- Significant investment to **improve transport links** including roads, cycling networks and parking – linking Oxfordshire’s world class universities with businesses and helping people get to where they need to be faster.
- Continued investment into Oxfordshire’s Growth Hub, Oxfordshire Business Support (OBS) which **helps local businesses access the support and make the connections needed for growth.**

The Oxfordshire Growth Deal is part of a national £12 billion long-term programme to revitalise local economies and was announced by the Government in July 2014. The deals are significant for rebuilding the British economy and sharing the benefits locally through the network of 39 LEPs.

For more information please see: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/jan/%C2%A31086m-growth-deal-oxfordshire-signed>

COUNTY COUNCIL SETS OUT LONG TERM TRANSPORT PLAN

On 27th January, the Cabinet of the County Council approved the Local Transport Plan (LTP4). It will now be sent out to **further consultation between February and April**. The plan will support the ambitions for the county up to 2031, before which an expected **100,000 new homes and 85,000 new jobs** are likely to be created.

The plan includes the Oxford Transport Strategy, which sets out ambitious plans for transport in and around Oxford city, including looking at **mass transit solutions like rapid bus services along strategic routes**, integrating transport modes by **transforming the park and ride network** and making it easier to cycle by introducing cycle super routes across the city. Also featured is our innovative ‘Science Transit’ approach to deliver a comprehensive, high quality public transport network for Oxfordshire and **new, updated Bus strategies**. *More information on the approved plan:* <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/jan/county-council-sets-out-long-term-transport-plan>

NEW SPECIALIST FIRE ENGINE UNVEILED

A new multi-purpose 12-ton fire engine packed with equipment to deal with a range of emergencies is set to be unveiled by Oxfordshire County Council’s Fire and Rescue Service. The vehicle, known as a Rescue Tender, will be based at Kidlington Fire Station. It carries over 300 pieces of equipment and is crewed by firefighters who have acquired specialist skills through an in-depth and on-going training regime to respond to challenging rescue incidents.

For more information see: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/jan/new-specialist-fire-engine-set-unveiling>

UNWANTED BOOK DRIVE AT 5 OXFORDSHIRE LIBRARIES

Oxfordshire people looking to make space on their bookshelves for Christmas gifts will have the opportunity to donate unwanted books to charity at local libraries during January and February.

The county council’s library service, in association with the National Literacy Trust are inviting donations of books at five libraries – Oxford Central, Witney, Banbury, Cowley and Didcot.

For more information see: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2015/jan/unwanted-book-drive-five-oxfordshire-libraries>

CONSULTATION ON SCHOOLS ADMISSION POLICY AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2016/2017

Oxfordshire County Council is consulting on its admission policies and arrangements for 2016/17. The scheme covers **all mainstream state funded** primary, infant, junior and secondary schools in Oxfordshire and will apply to the normal admissions round for the 2016-17 academic year.

There are a number of documents on the consultation homepage at:

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/admissionrules2016/consultationHome>

Closes March 1st 2015

PARISHES

BERINSFIELD

Speed Limit - The long-awaited 40mph speed limit at all four approach roads to the roundabout at Berinsfield has hit technical problems. The County Council agreed the limit several months ago, but our engineers are waiting to hear back from SEC on their planned programme for the illuminated signs required south of the roundabout. The other non-illuminated signs and road markings are in hand, but can't be put in place until this electrical work is completed. The earliest date being quoted at the moment is 'end of February'. Our officers and I continue to chase, but sadly this frustrating delay is out of our hands.

Cycle Way - At a recent Localities meeting I was able to promote the proposed cycle way from Berinsfield to Oxford on behalf of the Parish Council to Richard Jeremy, one of OCC's strategic planning officers who is directly involved with the development of the Local Transport Plan. He confirmed that it is not too late to get the scheme included into the plan by responding to the consultation which goes out in February.

Day Centre - The County Council is due to transfer our Adult Learning Service out to Abingdon and Witney College on 1st June. We have now agreed that The Union Cowley, Kidlington, Berinsfield, Banbury, Grove and Blackbird Leys centres will definitely transfer. The College have made it very clear that they want educational services in these locations to continue as now for at least a year. The Berinsfield Day Centre's lease with OCC Adult Learning will transfer to the College so they can operate as normal and expect no changes to this arrangement.

STADHAMPTON

65 Houses application - I have responded to the consultation on the planning application for 65 houses on land to the East of Newington Road, Stadhampton. I strongly oppose this development on the grounds that it would cause a dangerous escalation of traffic on the A329 which is a narrow country lane, already used as a rat run to the M40. It would also have serious implications for the County Council who is still responsible for the provision of school places. Stadhampton Primary School would have to be permanently enlarged to cope with the probable extra number of children. Both Icknield Community College and Lord Williams Academy would also need extra provision. A detailed response from OCC departments dealing with traffic, public transport, education, housing numbers, archaeological impact, library provision and waste management issues has been submitted to SODC. The Council would require the developer to provide Section 106 money in the region of £462,364.00 for the educational uplifts alone.

Village Hall Signs – I was able to donate £1,893.0 from my Community Budget towards improving access to information and signage about the new Village Hall. I hope it helps people find their way around, and to park with consideration for others.

CLIFTON HAMPDEN

New Infrastructure - After much lobbying it's good that The Science Vale transport strategy in LTP4 contains a key new scheme, involving a new road north from Didcot, an additional Thames river crossing, supplementary access to Culham Science Centre and a direct link to the B4015 up to the A4074 at the Golden Balls roundabout which would provide Clifton Hampden with a desperately needed bypass. The scheme would help to provide an additional link from south to north between the Science Vale and Oxford, in particular the major employment areas of Oxford in the Eastern Arc, as well as providing an alternative route to the A34. Improvements to access to the Culham Science Centre through increased connectivity by bus and cycle are also included.

SANDFORD ON THAMES

Village Hall - I was delighted to attend the official opening of the newly enlarged Sandford Village Hall on 10th January. This very ambitious project was envisaged and delivered by the residents, who managed to raise over £300K through fundraising and sponsorship from organisations including the County Council. The new hub will feature a regular Saturday market and a Brunch Café. Through my Councillor's Community Budget I have also been able to support the Youth Playground Group in the development of their scheme for a new play area on the recreation ground.

New Park & Ride – As part of the County Council's objective of cutting the number of cars going in and out of Oxford, a series of six new Park & Ride facilities are proposed in LTP4 and planned to be sited outside the ring road. The nearest one to villages in this Division is proposed to be sited next to the A4074 on the Science Park at Sandford. To encourage people to use these new car parks there will need to be a highly integrated and efficient bus service into the City, which is also planned.