

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS MAY 2016 FROM CLLR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

CHILDREN'S CENTRE CONTRACTS EXTENDED UNTIL SPRING 2017

OCC has extended contracts for Oxfordshire's children's centres and early intervention hubs until 31 March 2017. The Cabinet is due to meet on 24 May to consider a proposal on how to allocate an additional £2m that the County Council agreed not to cut from early intervention services when the budget was set in February. The extension to the contracts until the spring of 2017 is intended to allow more time to manage the transition into the new service, pending decisions being taken on how the £2m is to be spent. It will also allow more time for OCC to continue working with community groups to develop the best possible local solutions for the continuation of open access services – including proposals for the continued use of children's centre and hub buildings. Following the decision of the Cabinet, the council will carry out an extensive staff consultation regarding the new Children's Service model and the roles within it.

BERINSFIELD CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Following a very successful meeting of interested parties, a Steering Group has been established in Berinsfield to try and keep the Children's Centre open since it is one of the Centres that the County Council will no longer be able to fund. This Group includes representatives from the County Council, the Parish Council, the Church, Soha Housing, Employment Action Group, Berinsfield Information Centre, The Community Foundation and Action for Children who run the centre on behalf of the County Council. The Group will be seeking opinion and support from the village, and mounting a communications campaign this month. If anyone feels they would like to help to keep this valued facility open please get in touch with either myself, Jackie Logan at Soha, or any member of the Parish Council.

OXFORDSHIRE TOGETHER - HIGHWAY SERVICES NEXT STEPS

Since the launch of the Oxfordshire Together proposals in September 2015, around 140 town and parish councils have expressed an interest in taking on delivery of some local highway services that the council will no longer be able to deliver in the future, or will only deliver to the statutory minimum standard. OCC is now inviting all interested town and parish councils to sign the necessary agreements that will allow the council to formally transfer the undertaking of highway services under the Oxfordshire Together proposals to town and parish councils that wish to take them on. More information on Oxfordshire Together and the approach and services which can be taken on by Towns and Parishes can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshiretogether and any questions or comments should be sent to localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk

COUNTY'S ADOPTION WAITING TIMES AMONG NATION'S SHORTEST

Children are waiting less time to be adopted in Oxfordshire than almost anywhere else in the country, latest Government figures show. The council is rated among the best performing authorities on three key measures linked to the time taken for children in care to move in with adoptive families. Between 2012 and 2015, 73 per cent of Oxfordshire children waited less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family - the third highest figure out of 149 authorities across the country. The council was sixth best for the average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, and recorded the 15th shortest average time between receiving court authority to place a child and matching them with a family.

PIONEERING PROJECT BRINGS SERVICES CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE WHO USE THEM

People in Oxfordshire with learning disabilities have taken a lead role in the commissioning of services that will provide them with care and support. The project run by OCC involved about 60 people with learning disabilities and members of their families in the appointment of five new service providers to run contracts worth a total £15million. Service users and/or a member of their families sat on the evaluation panels which examined all the bids to provide 18 supported living services before deciding on the five successful providers. This means that on April 1, 2016 when the contracts came into force the appointment of the new providers will have been heavily influenced by some of the people who will use them.

TAXI SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All taxi drivers and passenger assistants transporting children and vulnerable adults as part of OCC contracts are now required to have completed safeguarding training. This training also covers bus and coach drivers. The aim of the training is to raise the bar for the safety of all passengers – and empower drivers to play a key role in protecting those in their care. Like other professionals who come into regular contact with children – including those with complex care needs – OCC wants to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge they need to feel confident in that environment and to ensure the safety of all passengers in their care.

ONE AND A HALF TIMES AROUND THE WORLD FOR OCC'S GRITTERS

OCC's gritters travelled the equivalent of one and a half times around the world this winter to keep the roads as safe as possible during the colder weather. The winter was not one of the coldest in recent times – so the total of 39,907 miles covered was not unusual compared to previous years. Gritters are on standby from October 30 right the way through to April in Oxfordshire – similar to many neighbouring councils. In total the gritters were sent out countywide on 32 occasions. In addition they were sent out on five occasions to specific areas in the north and south of the county only. A total of 6,374 tonnes of salt were used during the course of the winter – within the resources that had been brought in at the start of the colder months.

LATEST INFORMATION ON CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IN OXFORDSHIRE

An updated version of the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership's Strategic Intelligence Assessment has been published. The Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) provides the latest information on crime and community safety in Oxfordshire. It aids understanding of emerging trends and patterns in crime and disorder, and it explores future threats and opportunities. The SIA is part of the evidence base which supports community safety partners to plan and target their work. It is a good first port of call for anyone wanting to know about crime and community safety in Oxfordshire. The headline long-term trend shows that crime in Oxfordshire has fallen by 33% over the past eight years. The full report and an executive summary can be seen via this link: <http://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/community-safety-0>

Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Lorraine.lindsay-gale@oxfordshire.gov.uk