April 2023 County Councillor Report – Cllr Robin Bennett

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**Flooding in our area**

As we are in the spring flood season, a reminder that advice can be found both from the Environment Agency and the County Council, especially when the Environment Agency issues flood alerts or the more serious flood warnings. As we can all see, consistent rainfall throughout March has led to high river levels on many watercourses in Oxfordshire.

Latest flood alerts from the Environment Agency:

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk>

What to do in the event of a flood, from the County Council:­

<https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com>

In an emergency, please contact Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on **999.**

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service’s main responsibility is saving lives, property and the environment. During a flooding incident you should focus on the safety of yourself and others and stay out of floodwater, as it is often not clean and can lead to infections and illness.

**Weight restrictions for HGVs**

Oxfordshire County Council are currently conducting a study to investigate the feasibility of area based weight restrictions. OCC are inviting local people to share their views on where there are problems with inappropriate Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements to help inform the study. This is a particular issue in our area on some of the historic bridges and villages, so do take part if you can in the survey:

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/area-weight-restrictions>

**Spare seats and school buses**

I have engaged with a recent working group looking at school transport issues. This has resulted in recommendations to cabinet to improve the policy, and also to help parents who are currently at risk of losing their spare seats bus places. I have been talking to colleagues, parents and council staff to try to ensure that the challenges facing parents and children in our area are taken seriously and addressed. As well as spare seats, the review is looking at over-16 school travel, safe walking/cycling routes, and better support for community travel solutions. The decisions on the recommendations will come to a Cabinet meeting in the next few months.

**Motion on Future Generations at OCC**

To improve decision-making at the council, and following the success of similar policies in Wales and Scotland, I co-wrote a council motion at the March full council meeting of OCC - passed unanimously - which asked the council’s Cabinet to:

* Review how all decision-making and commissioning of services will consider the wellbeing of future generations
* implement a ‘Future Generations impact assessment’ section in all officer reports for elected decision-makers, and
* set up an Oxfordshire Youth and Future Generations Advisory Council