

REPORT TO BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL JANUARY 2019 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

BUDGET PROPOSALS

Tough decisions taken since 2010 have created a route to financial stability at OCC as the council plans to set its 2019/20 budget at a time when all councils face financial challenges. The main budget proposals are:

- Investment of almost £6m by 2023 to increase care packages to meet assessed needs for adults with learning and physical disabilities. (Adult Social Care)
- An increase of £5.8m is proposed to be added to the budget in 2022/23 in adult social care to meet projected increased need as a result of the aging population. The council's existing planning up to 2021/22 already includes provision for budget increases of £5.0m in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and £5.6m in 2021/22. (Adult Social Care)
- Invest £3.2m up to 2023 (£800,000 per year) to support the increasing number of children qualifying for school transport – in particular children with special educational needs. (Children, Education and Families)
- Invest £17m to support the predicted increasing numbers of children in care, including more permanent care staff (Children, Education and Families)

With regard to Council Tax, the council's plan – agreed at the last budget in February 2018 – to raise Council Tax by 2.99 per cent in 2019/20 and 1.99 per cent in the years thereafter remains the same in the new budget proposals. However, funding for local government beyond 2020 is currently uncertain, with councils waiting for funding decisions from central government which will not be known until late 2019.

DELIVERING AN OLDER PEOPLE'S STRATEGY FOR OXFORDSHIRE

Living longer and living better is the drive behind a new Older People's Strategy for Oxfordshire. The strategy sets out how OCC and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group will deliver a positive future for the county's older population. It was developed following feedback over a three-month period. Residents, health and charity organisations, professionals, businesses, the public sector and community groups were engaged in the strategy development so it could be grounded in what people tell us matters most to them. The strategy's vision and priorities were specifically co-produced with a wide range of people whose work and lives it affects. The strategy will be used to inform the planning, commissioning and delivery of services across Oxfordshire and will be monitored by the Better Care Fund Joint Management Group reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board. To read the strategy and have your say online visit here <https://consult.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/consult.ti/OPLLLB/consultationHome> or request a paper copy of the strategy by calling 01865 334638. The closing date for comments is Feb 1, 2019.

DAYTIME SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY GRANT AWARDS

Twenty-nine organisations have been recommended to receive grants from the county council's adult social care Sustainability Fund. The fund was established last year as part of measures designed to enable the ongoing delivery of daytime support services in Oxfordshire. A grant pot of £250,000 was approved for 2019/20 and community and voluntary organisations were invited to apply for the fund between September 12 and November 2. To allocate the funding to as many organisations as possible, a panel of county councillors and people representing daytime services recommended that a maximum level of 70 per cent of the amount awarded in 2018/19 should be made where applicable. Among those services recommended for funding are Day Break Oxford (£50,000), Age UK (£27,500), October Club (£14,000) and Aspire (£12,500). Applications totalling £244,847 went before Cabinet on December 18.

SEND SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY GAINS APPROVAL

Plans to create significant new provision for Oxfordshire children with special educational needs (SEND) have been agreed by councillors, with a £15m investment set to create 300 new places which will involve a major rebuild for Northfield School in Oxford. The county council has conducted a wide-ranging review of its special educational needs provision in light of the large increases in the numbers of children with such needs entering the educational system in recent years and the forecast for continued increases in the future. The rebuild of Northfield School would be accompanied by a new school at Bloxham Grove in North Oxfordshire (due to open in 2020) and at Valley Park, Didcot (target date 2023) as part of a free school application process. At a national level, the Department for Education will be rolling out a new assessment approach for pupils with complex disabilities, from 2020. DfE has said “The statutory assessment will replace P scales 1 to 4 and will be based on the ‘7 aspects of engagement’, an assessment approach that focuses on pupils abilities in specific areas like awareness, curiosity and anticipation”. A guidance and training package will be developed and delivered to schools, local authorities, Ofsted and parents prior to programme roll out.

£10 MILLION PROGRAMME DELIVERING ROAD REPAIRS GETS £7M BOOST

Journeys on Oxfordshire’s roads have already been significantly improved in recent months thanks to an extra £10million being spent by OCC this year on repairing and improving road surfaces. Government announced in November that OCC would get £7.4 in additional funding to top-up this activity. A range of different methods of road repair and sealing are used to extend the life of county roads and reduce the likelihood of potholes forming which include resurfacing, patching, Dragon-patching and surface dressing.

OCC WELCOMES GOVERNMENT’S WASTE STRATEGY

OCC has welcomed the government’s new Waste and Resources Strategy for England, describing it as “ambitious”, with the potential to “transform the way that waste is viewed and managed.” Key points within the strategy include:

- Introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers to improve the amount recycled when out and about (known as ‘on the go’ recycling)
- Improved and extended redistribution of surplus food from businesses, and mandatory food waste collections from businesses and households.
- A national recycling target of 65 percent by 2035 (current national recycling rate is 45 percent)

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

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

DAMAGED/OBSCURED SIGNS ON DUAL CARRIAGEWAY

The Traffic Technical Officer has now received details of the necessary specialist sign supports and foundations for the sign. He is now arranging for contractors to price and undertake the work, which includes taking opportunity to cut back the vegetation along the verge and remove / chip up any arising debris. I am awaiting confirmation of timing.

DOBSONS LANE, LOWER ASSENDON

I have received further complaints about the condition of this lane and raised the matter again with the Principal Officer, Area Operations (South). The response is as follows:

"...one of my colleagues from the Highway & Drainage team visited Dobsons Lane between Christmas and New Year, hence the uneven road signs which have now been placed on site. His report to me confirmed that the road is in need of attention. Initially a road closure will be required in order to clear the area of the compacted detritus so that the road surface can be reviewed. In the short term, patching is probably the only option, however it will be promoted as a potential surfacing site in the future. I do not have a timescale for any of these works unfortunately, however I will arrange for the road to be inspected periodically for safety defects."

WHITE LANE ROAD CLOSURE

A request has been received from Thames Water for a temporary road closure to apply to a section of White Lane whilst leaking water mains works are carried out. A temporary Notice is being made to implement the temporary closures and will operate from the 4 March 2019 up to and including the 6 March 2019. This is a daily 24 hour closure. Access will be maintained for emergency service vehicles and for those frontages within the closure area, subject to the progress of the works and liaison with the works supervisor.

TOWN AND PARISH LIAISON EVENT THURSDAY 17TH JANUARY 2019

As part of the Thriving Communities vision, OCC wants to move away from the traditional top-down service design and delivery and talk to people to help shape plans and hear local voices. To support this, there will be a town and parish liaison event on Thursday 17th January 2019 at Sonning Common Village Hall starting at 2pm and ending at 5pm. The event will start with a short presentation followed by round table discussions. Please register for the event at townparishevents@oxfordshire.gov.uk