

# REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS **SEPTEMBER 2023**

## FROM Cllr Nigel Simpson

### **Local Plan consultation confirmed for later this month**

Following executive approval, we will start consulting on a draft Local Plan Review 2040. The consultation will include exhibitions to allow people to discuss the draft plan with our Planning Policy team, who have done a sterling job pulling this together. As always we will let you know when the consultation dates are confirmed, and the consultation is live.

**CDC adopts new Tenants' Charter** - as you know, this outlines the services our tenants can expect from us as their landlord, and we want all landlords to follow our lead. We are sending the Charter out to our tenants this week and have begun issuing wider communications. There is more on our new Tenants' Charter on our [website](#).

### **TO ALL OXFORDSHIRE PARISH COUNCILS, PARISH TRANSPORT REPRESENTATIVES AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS EXCEPT THOSE IN THE OXFORD CITY AREA**

Following the launch of the grant funding package to support new and improved community transport provision across Oxfordshire, please be advised that the deadline for applications has been extended to **Friday 13th October**. This will hopefully provide more time for local councils in particular to discuss partnership arrangements with neighbouring communities and existing community transport schemes.

A revised application form is attached: **however if you have already submitted your application there is no need to resubmit.**

If you have any questions please feel free to email them to [communitytransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:communitytransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

## **Officers recommend approval for football stadium proposal - planning permission would still be needed**

Officers at Oxfordshire County Council are recommending approval for Oxford United to use county council owned land known as 'the Triangle' near Kidlington to build a new stadium.

Should the council's Cabinet approve the lease or sale of the land to the football club at its meeting of 19 September, Oxford United would still need to seek planning approval from Cherwell District Council as the local planning authority.

The officer recommendation comes with a qualification that the football club must produce a net-zero plan that is fully costed and comes with clear timescales and outcomes from design, construction and full operation of the stadium.

The recommendation for approval also includes the requirement for covenants that would set aside the use of the land for football/community sports and leisure/sports stadia in perpetuity, with limited ancillary commercial use within the stadium footprint.

A report summarising the public engagement undertaken in the summer, together with officers' analysis of the club's response to the council's strategic priorities, will be considered by a meeting of the council's Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee on 13 September before then being considered by Cabinet on 19 September as part of its final decision on whether to lease or sell the land to the club.

A total of 5,441 people and organisations responded to the public survey during June and July as the county council sought views on whether the club's proposals address the council's seven strategic priorities. The council owns the land in question.

Previous to this, a series of targeted, independently facilitated meetings with stakeholders were held in April and May to explore early views on the OUFC proposals. Public and stakeholder engagement had also taken place in 2022.

Just over two thirds of those who responded to the survey were 'a resident of Oxfordshire' (71 per cent). Overall, a slim majority of Oxfordshire resident respondents felt the information provided by the club fully addressed the council's seven strategies priorities, with percentages varying between 51 and 60 per cent depending on the priority.

There were, however, geographical variations, with respondents who live nearest to the proposed site holding the strongest reservations. The detailed report can be found in the [report to the cabinet](#) and [report to the scrutiny community](#) .

## **Update on RAAC in a small number of academies in Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire County Council can confirm that none of the schools it runs is affected by the current RAAC (Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) issue that has been prominent in the national news. The council had been making regular condition checks in recent years.

Only one Oxfordshire secondary school is a local authority maintained school and around half of primary schools in the county are now academies. These schools are therefore run

independently of the council and managed by the Regional Schools Director/Department for Education.

The county council has been kept informed by a small number of academies in the county who do have RAAC issues but who have each come up with arrangements to ensure that children continue to be educated. Parents were fully informed of the individual situations at these schools by academy trusts earlier this week. The county council will help each school where it can.

The schools are:

- Larkmead School in Abingdon has worked to continue to be able to provide face to face learning although some classrooms are not available due to RAAC. Classes/years are being rotated so that all pupils are in school for at least some of the time. Those who are not attending on any given day are being taught at home for now. The county council is seeking to assist in the process of sourcing temporary classrooms.
- Wallingford School remains open to all children despite some areas of the buildings being affected by RAAC, again the council is trying to assist with temporary classrooms.
- Hardwick School in Banbury is able to remain open to all children despite a small part of the school potentially being affected by RAAC with survey work being undertaken.

## **OCC APPLIES TO ITSELF FOR PLANNING PERMISSION – AND REFUSES IT**

OCC has been awarded millions of pounds in Government funding to build roads and other necessary infrastructure to support housing in Didcot. It is known as the Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1). Such construction requires planning permission, so OCC had to apply to itself for permission. Despite being Council policy backed by Cabinet and officers, the application was refused by the OCC planning committee. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities subsequently called in the decision. This means there will be a review by the government-appointed planning inspectorate and the Secretary of State will take the final decision about whether to approve the application.

## **OXFORD SECTORISATION MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN PUBLISHED**

Detailed plans for how OCC will monitor and evaluate the impact of splitting Oxford in to four sectors by using “traffic filters” have now been published. The monitoring and evaluation plan sets out how the council will measure the predicted impacts of sectorisation, based on evidence. Sectorisation will be implemented as a trial under an experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO), expected to begin in autumn 2024, after Network Rail’s work to improve Oxford rail station is completed and Botley Road is re-opened. The proposals have been hugely controversial and the council hopes the monitoring and evaluation plan will dilute opposition. Documents are available to view on the council website:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/TrafficFilterMEPlanSummary.pdf>

## **FORMER “JUST STOP OIL ACTIVIST” APPOINTED BY OCC AS TREE OFFICER**

A man from Stonesfield has been appointed as OCC’s Tree Officer, despite being punished with a 12-month community order in March for a Formula One track invasion at last year’s British Grand Prix. The man, along with five other protesters, was spared jail in March at Northampton Crown Court but was found guilty of causing an immediate risk of serious harm by sitting in the face of fast-moving vehicles. He previously took part in Just Stop Oil antics in Oxford city centre

in 2021 and hit out at the county council for a “complete lack of leadership on the climate crisis”. An OCC spokesman emphasised the officer was no longer involved with Just Stop Oil and his appointment was only made after a rigorous assessment.

## **NEW FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT LAUNCHED**

Firefighters across Oxfordshire are now benefitting from new equipment consisting of improved face masks, body-shaped shoulder straps and hip belt, backplate and oxygen cylinders as part of OCC’s Fire and Rescue Service’s commitment to ensuring crews have the best protection.

## **TRIAL OF LONGER-LASTING ROAD SURFACE**

A west Oxfordshire road in Middle Barton is being resurfaced with a high-performance material to test the product’s ability to increase the life of a highway. OCC is carrying out the trial in North Street, with its contractor Milestone Infrastructure and their partner Aggregate Industries to develop the use of Gipave – a Graphene Plus-enhanced asphalt. A 725-metre stretch of the road will be laid with Gipave, while an adjacent length of road will be resurfaced using conventional high-performance asphalt, so that the two surfaces can be compared accurately.

## **FREE ELECTRIC BLANKET TEST**

Residents are being encouraged to take up the offer of a free electric blanket check, part of OCC’s programme to ensure everyone is safe, as well as warm, this winter. The electric blanket tests are normally very popular, with places limited, therefore, they must be **pre-booked**: by visiting <https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/blankettesting> or by calling 01865 895999 or by emailing [duty.officer@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:duty.officer@oxfordshire.gov.uk) The full list of dates and locations is provided below.

- Monday 18 September – Oxford City
- Tuesday 19 September – South Oxfordshire
- Wednesday 20 September – Cherwell
- Thursday 21 September – West Oxfordshire
- Friday 22 September – Vale of White Horse
- Monday 2 October – Oxford City
- Tuesday 3 October – South Oxfordshire
- Wednesday 4 October – Cherwell
- Thursday 5 October – West Oxfordshire
- Friday 6 October – Vale of White Horse

The actual address and a specific time slot will be provided at time of booking.

## **CHARGES FOR NON-HOUSEHOLD WASTE (DIY) AT OCC RECYCLING CENTRES**

The Government has announced their intention to abolish charges on small amounts of DIY wastes brought to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC’s) to help cut fly tipping. Larger amounts may still be charged for. OCC is awaiting further information and guidance of when this will commence, until then all DIY charges across all of Oxfordshire’s seven HWRC’s remain in place. The Government’s announcement did not abolish all charges but set a minimum level to be accepted for free, larger amounts will still be charged for. At present the Government have indicated that the amount of waste accepted for free will be as follows:

- the quantity of waste per visit must be no greater than two 50L rubble bags or 1 bulky or fitted item no larger than 2000mm x 750mm x700mm, such as a bathtub.
- the waste must not be produced on a regular basis requiring HWRC visits more frequently than four times per household over a four-week period.

## **REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS OF £840K FOR JUST FOUR INDIVIDUALS**

AT Full Council in July, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services confirmed that just four individuals received a total of £840k payments in respect of redundancy, PILON (pay in lieu of notice) and pension contributions. Overall, 36 members of staff were made redundant with a total bill well into seven figures.

## **OXFORDSHIRE HGV STRATEGY**

OCC Highways have begun scoping work on exploring the option of an HGV strategy for the County. Initial areas to be monitored will be Henley and The Windrush Valley to gather data. The earliest any Countywide scheme could come into action would be Summer 2025. The one major problem should the strategy come into effect will be the lack of enforcement. This is something that the officers are aware of and are working with their partners to explore all options.