

Oxfordshire County Council Parish Briefing

To start the New Year on a positive note, here are the highlights of OCC's achievements during 2018:

- A balanced budget which allows us some stability as we wait for the next spending review
- A Transformation Programme that will deliver savings which will give us some real choices in future budgets particularly 2021
- A Growth Deal bringing in £215 million over the next 5 years
- An increase in Children's social care that will have seen it rise from £46.4 million in 2011 to £77.9 million in the current year 2018/19
- The top recycling rate for a disposal authority in England with a rate of 57.2%
- A new way of working with Cherwell District council which is not only delivering savings but providing a better service for Cherwell residents.
- A reduction in the numbers of Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC) to a weekly average of below 90 since May 2018
- A new Fire Station at Carterton
- Officially opened the refurbished Central Library
- Retained our 'good' Ofsted rating for children's services
- £120 million infrastructure programme over the next 10 years with £80 million for Highway improvements
- A Capital programme of £891 million over the next 10 years with 2 Housing Infrastructure Fund bids worth over £300 that would make the overall programme over £1.2 billion

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 is committed to protecting the local environment as part of its Thriving Communities initiative.

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

BROADBAND

With regret, I need to advise the completion date for our coverage under contract with Openreach has moved out to June 2019. The Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme has delivered superfast broadband access to some 76,000 premises to date and the remaining delivery is in rural to very rural locations. This more challenging geography has meant some delays in completion of the necessary civils work, which has been compounded by civils contractors seemingly being in great demand. Across England, just about every similar local delivery programme is enduring a similar issue, whether the lead contractor is Openreach or other infrastructure operators.

Nonetheless, we are aware of the growing dependence of having access to decent broadband and we are working hard to ensure Openreach have made evidential arrangements to secure additional civils contracting resource available in Oxfordshire to deliver our remaining contracted coverage as soon as possible.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards



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