

REPORT TO BIX & ASSENDON PARISH COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 2018 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

NEW PARTNERSHIP APPROVED BY OCC AND CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Councillors at OCC and Cherwell District Council have approved a proposal for a partnership between the two local authorities, including the appointment of a joint chief executive. The partnership arrangement will offer long-term opportunities to join up services for residents, reduce the costs of providing services, and secure investment in Cherwell to enable the continued growth in homes and jobs. The partnership proposal came after the financial problems in Northamptonshire County Council, which has implications for Cherwell's existing partnership with South Northamptonshire Council, created an opportunity to explore closer joint working. The joint arrangement was approved by county councillors on 10 July and Cherwell councillors on 16 July, and will come into effect on 1 October. Partnership arrangements under a single chief executive will make joint working more effective and deepen the partnership arrangements. Spatial and transport planners already work closely together on schemes related to housing and infrastructure, and that will be make day-to-day working simpler as they are working to a single chief executive. Following a formal internal recruitment process, Yvonne Rees, the current chief executive of Cherwell and South Northamptonshire councils has been appointed to the new post of joint chief executive of Oxfordshire and Cherwell councils, with a start date of 1 October. The post of county council chief executive, currently occupied by Peter Clark, will be made redundant.

STUDENTS RECEIVE A-LEVEL RESULTS ACROSS OXFORDSHIRE

Thousands of students are preparing to take their crucial next steps after receiving A-Level results at schools and colleges across Oxfordshire last month. Confirmed pass rates for the county as a whole will be confirmed when national figures are published later this year. In the previous two years the key benchmark of two or more A-Levels at the A*-E pass rate was achieved by around 95 per cent of students. For anyone unsure of their next steps after A-Level or GCSE exam results, further help can be found at the [Oxme website](#) and through the [National Careers Service](#) which has a helpline number - **0800 100 900**. Throughout the results period and beyond, county council staff will be available via the web chat service on the [Oxme website](#) or over the phone (**01865 328460**) to talk to young people and parents about the wide range of learning and employment opportunities available in Oxfordshire for 16-19-year-olds, and to help with applications. Details of [drop-in sessions](#) can also be found on the council's website.

OCC COUNTS THE COST OF THE CARILLION COLLAPSE

OCC is carrying out a detailed review of the costs and liabilities related to its properties following the Carillion collapse so that a robust financial plan can be considered by councillors in the autumn and included in the council's budget. Carillion provided services on behalf of OCC including maintenance of council buildings; property services, and building work such as school extensions. OCC made a net payment of £10.6m at the end of December 2017 to Carillion to cover work already completed as part of the final settlement to end the contract with the company, limiting any future financial liability. However, the costs of dealing with ongoing construction and property maintenance problems following the Carillion collapse have not yet been calculated but are expected to be "very significant". Surveys to assess defects in buildings including schools are continuing across the county council's properties. Compliance with health and safety requirements is also being considered, with any safety issues that emerge being dealt with quickly.

CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN DELAYED TRANSFER OF CARE NUMBERS

The latest published figures on people who are unnecessarily in hospital while they await confirmation of care arrangements have been published. The figures for June 2018 show that on average 90 Oxfordshire residents had their hospital discharge delayed. This is 9% fewer than in May and less than half the number of people delayed than the same time last year. Oxfordshire's delays figure trajectory continues to be better than national improvement with a 0.3% improvement in the last month and a drop of a quarter in the last year.

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY TRAVEL ENCOURAGED BY OCC

Commuters returning to work after the holiday period are being encouraged to walk or cycle, for all or part of their journey, by OCC. The council is championing healthy alternatives to the car, which will also help to reduce congestion and pollution on the county's roads. Exercise is widely recognised as one of the best ways to improve physical and mental health. Daily physical activity lowers the risk of depression and dementia by around 30 per cent according to the Department of Health. Exercise also reduces the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and strokes. The council has appointed an active and healthy travel officer, using central government funding, to assess existing walking and cycling routes. Priority will be given to improvements and maintenance schemes designed to encourage active travel and reduce pollution. Over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes are planned in Oxfordshire by 2031. The council is committed to ensuring that as the population grows, infrastructure is in place to encourage healthy travel options. Streets and spaces will be developed to put first the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. OCC's Cycling Champion, Councillor Suzanne Bartington, said: *"Active travel is win, win, win - for health, the environment and local economy. I encourage Oxfordshire residents to try foot or bike even for only part of their journey and feel the positive benefits for themselves."* For further information about the benefits of active travel, visit the website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/whycycle

£80K BOOST FOR KIDS' CYCLING SAFETY

Almost every primary school child in the county will now be able to get free cycle safety training after the award of an £84,500 [Bikeability](#) grant which will pay for an additional 2000 places. The bulk of cycling training in the county is carried out by a 700-strong army of volunteer instructors under the Oxfordshire Cycle Training Scheme, which has been running for more than 40 years. Training is offered to children from nine-years-old and up and is a mixture of learning about the Highways Code and practical 'on the road' tuition. Parents and carers who want their children to take part in training should contact their school's head teacher.

SPECIFIC REPORT FOR BIX & ASSENDON

DAMAGED/OBSCURED SIGNS ON DUAL CARRIAGEWAY

I am continuing to press for a firm date for repairs. As of today, there was no news.

OLD BIX ROAD FIX MY STREET 858273

In response to a query from the clerk, I followed up the issue of overgrown trees on Old Bix Road. A Highways Inspector has visited the site and I am awaiting details of actions proposed.

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND

As advised in earlier reports, if the PC identifies Highways projects costing a total of £2k, I will meet half the cost from my fund (subject to the conditions outlined previously).