

PARISH REPORT MAY 2016

Unitary

I have always been clear that the best way forward was to be open and transparent with one single report into the potential benefits of the various unitary options. On 18th April, after the Districts announced that they had commissioned PwC to conduct their study, we set out that we were willing to halt our procurement and join that piece of work, to ensure best value for taxpayers. This offer was subject to four requests which I hope you agree are reasonable. These were:

1. *An independent person is appointed that will co-ordinate and be the main contact with PwC.*
2. *A stakeholder group is formulated, which includes not just Districts and the County but other key stakeholders.*
3. *All options are treated equally with no preferences.*
4. *That no particular organisations are given preferential access to revisions for the final report.*

Unfortunately the Districts were unwilling to agree to these reasonable terms so the County council will continue to commission a study. Given that the potential savings to local taxpayers could be over £30 million pa, which could either, be re-invested in services or reduce council tax, it's vital that all parties have full confidence in the report.

Woodstock East Planning application

A new outline planning application for up to 300 homes and up to 1100sqm of A1/A2/B1/D1 floorspace has been submitted for the Woodstock East site. Given the current capacity issues at the primary school it's important that any development provides a solution to any addition pupils along with other infrastructure matters. The uncertainty of West Oxfordshire's Local plan makes it vital that Woodstock has strong representation at planning meetings to put forward Woodstock's concerns.

Cuttleslowe & Wolvercote Roundabouts

Our contractor, Skanska, have made excellent progress transforming the roads at Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts. This is a very large site which is 1.25 miles from end to end. It is also a very complex project involving the diversion and protection of water, gas, electricity and telephone infrastructure to complete careful work without interrupting the public's supply. Whilst still keeping the road open to traffic.

As the project progresses the team are continuously looking for opportunities to accelerate the programme and have recently identified a six week programme saving which is being progressed to enable a mid-Oct completion. This did mean the closure of one lane on the A44 to enable work on the central reservation to be carried out safely. However, due to the progress made, and following further investigation, it has been decided that two lanes each measuring 3m wide can be introduced. The bus lane will also remain open and cyclists will still be able to use the shared foot and cycleway on the BP side of the A44 as usual.

I have full confidence in our contractor partner Skanska, a Swedish Company who are a world leading engineering company. In this instance, we have reduced the programme length by increasing the numbers of site staff on those activities where it is possible to do so.

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One and a half times around the world for Oxfordshire's gritters in winter 2015/16

Oxfordshire County Council's gritters travelled the equivalent of one and a half times around the world this Winter to keep the roads as safe as possible during the colder weather. The winter was not one of the coldest in recent times – so the total of 64,224 kilometres covered (or 39,907 miles) was not unusual compared to previous years. Gritters are on standby from October 30 right the way through to April in Oxfordshire – similar to many neighbouring councils.

In total the gritters were sent out countywide on 32 occasions. In addition they were sent out on five occasions to specific areas in the north and south of the county only. A total of 6,374 tonnes of salt were used during the course of the Winter – within the resources that had been brought in at the start of the colder months.

Cabinet 24th May

There will be some key decisions to be taken at the May Cabinet meeting such as; Future Arrangements for Children's Social Care, Investing in the A40 - A Long Term Strategy, Supported Transport Update full details will be available on the website by 17th May.

Vote PCC & District

Don't forget to vote on 5th May for the Police and Crime Commissioner in all areas across the division. In the wards of Stonesfield and Tackley along with Woodstock & Bladon there are District elections. The polling stations are open from 7:00am to 10:00 pm.

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