

PARISH REPORT NOVEMBER 2019

A40 HID BID

Oxfordshire County Council has been successful with its Housing Infrastructure Fund bid of £102.00 million which is addition to the current £38 million A40 bus lane scheme.

The announcement means that the County Council can deliver:

Extension of the A40 dual carriageway from Witney to the proposed Eynsham park and ride, including improving cycling facilities along the route.

Extension of A40 westbound bus lane from west of Duke's Cut Canal and railway bridges close [to](#) Oxford near to the proposed Eynsham park and ride.

A40 capacity and connectivity improvements to widen access at Duke's Cut Canal and railway bridges, extending the eastbound and westbound bus priority lane, prioritising bus rapid transit at this pinch point.

Delivering these schemes will help the traffic flow along the A40 which should lead to a reduction in traffic cutting through the A4095, this includes HGVs.

NORTH COTSWOLD LINE TASKFORCE

It's not just about road improvements to the A40 corridor as Oxfordshire County Council along with Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire County Councils are working with Network Rail and First Great Western on developing the North Cotswold line. This would include partial doubling of the line, station improvements along with signal improvements, the cost would be in the region up to £200 million pounds. We need to produce a strategic business case that then can be agreed to release the funds from the department of Transport. The outcome from this would be 4 trains an hour from Hanborough which would transform connectivity to Oxford and London.

LOCAL CYCLING ROUTES

I would like to thank Colin Carritt for organising a meeting to discuss local cycling routes which would improve routes in and around Woodstock. we all have to work together to get the maximum benefit. Two key routes were discussed one from Old Woodstock into the centre of town and to the school. The other route was to Hanborough station making it as easy as possible for people to cycle to the [station](#).

YOUTH FUND

Voluntary and community organisations are being invited to bid for a share of Oxfordshire County Council's new £1m Youth Opportunity Fund. The fund is aimed at groups that can provide activities and opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-18, and 11-25 with special educational needs.

Feedback from Oxfordshire residents points to strong support for improving community-run youth services. This new fund is available to help existing projects expand and new ones get started. Grants of up to £70,000 are available.

By offering start-up funding in previous years, the council has already helped many community-run groups provide support for younger children and families. Now the aim is to do the same for youth services.

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Community-run youth schemes complement the work of the county council's children's services, which target resources at young people and families with additional needs and those at risk of abuse and neglect. The council also has a desire for more youth clubs to be established. The county council believes communities are well placed to provide universal services and this is already an established model in Oxfordshire.

A fund was launched in 2016 to provide grants for local groups to start services for children such as 'stay and play', with the creation or continuation of around 40 projects. A similar fund was created for voluntary and community groups to start up day services for older and disabled people in Oxfordshire.

BUDGET

The budget process starts as soon as the budget is set each February. ~~However,~~ intense work is carried out through the autumn leading up to Christmas. The announcement of additional Government ~~funding~~ was welcome news ~~howeverbut~~ it was disappointing that it was only for ~~one~~ year as ~~Local~~ Government were expecting a longer-term settlement. There is pressure on both Adult and ~~Childrens~~Children's Social Care due to increased demand so there will be some difficult decisions to take during the budget setting process. With the announcement of a General Election it will mean some late announcements on the details of local government funding in December.

~~Oxfordshire County Council is committed to keeping a library facility within Woodstock and options need to be considered. Whilst the current size of the temporary facility is not as large as previously, the opening hours have increased by nearly 50% giving more opportunity for residents to use the library. There have been some innovative local co-locations in Charlbury and Wood Green, Banbury which have increased the library hours even more. I think its worth visiting either or both of those libraries to see what can be achieved by co-location with other facilities.~~

COMMUNITY FIRST

~~The work that Community First is carrying out regarding development around Woodstock gives the Town an opportunity to input into some key themes; Connectivity from Old Woodstock, Parking and the Library.~~

~~There does need to be a safe off-road pedestrian/cycle path from Old Woodstock as the current pinch points along the pavement and the vehicles do not encourage residents to walk or cycle only adding to the traffic on the already busy A44. Also, there is a safety report by Oxfordshire County Council due this month which should highlight the key areas of concern.~~

~~Parking in the centre of town continues to be an issue and a long term solution is required to ensure that there is a balance between the needs of the residents along with and enough parking place to keep the town centre businesses vibrant and successful. We await the parking report, but it can be linked to the work that Community First are doing.~~

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

~~The matter of Home to School transport is a major issue in Middle Barton, I'll be holding a meeting to address this and try to explain the situation. Although the national law is clear that free transport is only provided to the nearest school there are some situations that occur when there are no places at a school, this is what will be explained at the meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you want further information.~~

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ELECTRIC BLANKETS

The weather has changed with winter fast approaching now is the time to start planning ahead. Free electric blanket testing is offered over a two-week period during October at different locations around the county.

Book your electric blanket in for a free check

- Thame – Monday 7 October 2019
- Oxford – Tuesday 8 October 2019
- Banbury – Wednesday 9 October 2019
- Witney – Thursday 10 October 2019
- Abingdon – Friday 11 October 2019
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- Oxford – Monday 21 October 2019
- Bicester – Tuesday 22 October 2019
- Henley – Wednesday 23 October 2019
- Chipping Norton – Thursday 24 October 2019
- Grove – Friday 25 October 2019

To pre-book an electric blanket safety check, phone 01865 895999 or email communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

GROWTH DEAL FUNDING

I have been working hard over ~~recent~~^{recent} months to try and find a solution to the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid for Didcot, I know that the senior members of SODC want to retain the funding however there is a requirement for a local plan to be in place. The decision by the Secretary of State to put a holding notice on SODC's local plan does mean there is more time to find a solution.

The announcement of the A40 HIF bid is good news as it does separate the 2 bids, however, ~~We~~^{We} know that WODC do have a Local Plan in place which will allow the bid to proceed. The impact of a failed bid due to having no ~~Local~~^{Local} Plan in place is not confined to SODC; if there is no HIF then the Vale Local Plan could also fail. I urge SODC members to follow the route of Vale members and continue with the submitted Local Plan and have an early review, this would retain the £218 million HIF bid.

I am continuing to work with members and officers at SODC to find a solution.

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