

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2024

FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

OXFORDSHIRE 'PARK AND RIDE' SITE BUILT WITHOUT ROAD ACCESS

OCC has almost finished building a £51m 'park and ride' site with 850 spaces near Eynsham, but it remains closed because there is no access road. Concerns have been expressed that the site will sit unused for years until OCC secures funding to build the necessary road. However, the council stated that the park and ride site was intentionally completed ahead of the roadwork to save costs amid rising inflation and construction expenses. The broader A40 improvement plan, including bus lanes, is now subject to funding discussions with Homes England and the Department for Transport. OCC hopes to finalise funding agreements soon and to have the park and ride fully operational by 2027.

OCC SEEKS TO EMBED COMMERCIAL MINDSET

OCC has launched an authority-wide strategy to “get the organisation thinking more commercially” – which could lead to “bigger opportunities” in the future. An overview of the commercial strategy presented to OCC’s cabinet, states that the council “aims to optimise organisational efficiency and generate sustainable revenue through innovative and responsible commercial activities”. Some councillors have raised concerns around the council’s need to get the right balance between commercial endeavours and serving residents. Councils have a very mixed record when it comes to making investments outside their areas of expertise.

HIF1 ROAD SCHEME

A public inquiry into plans for a £269million road scheme has reached its final stages. Closing statements relating to the planning application for the [Didcot](#) and surrounding areas major infrastructure (HIF1) scheme were heard on April 23. OCC has been planning the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) scheme for almost a decade. The proposals included creating a dual carriageway on the A4130 from the A34 Milton Interchange towards Didcot, new bridges and a Clifton Hampden bypass. In July 2023, [Michael Gove called in the planning application](#) after OCC applied to itself for planning permission but the OCC planning committee refused it – despite recommendations from officers that it should be approved.

OFSTED JUDGES CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN OXFORDSHIRE AS “GOOD”

Ofsted has judged OCC’s children’s services as good as part of an inspection that took place in February 2024. The assessment took place as part of the government’s [inspecting local authority children’s services \(ILACS\) system](#). Inspectors praised the county council for a number of improvements across its services [since its last inspection in 2018](#), which were also judged overall as good, leading to even better outcomes for children and young people.

HEADS OF TERMS AGREED WITH OXFORD UNITED FOR STADIUM LAND

An agreement has been reached on heads of terms for OCC to lease land it owns near Kidlington for Oxford United to develop a new football stadium. The council’s cabinet agreed in principle for land known as the “triangle” to be leased at its meeting in September 2023. Detailed negotiations have now led to heads of terms being agreed. A number of other key legal and partnership agreements will follow to meet the council’s strategic objectives and also to ensure that the club fulfils its commitments to the local community and sports groups.

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

THAMES FARM

I have no update in relation to the S278 highway works.

WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS – MUD ON ROAD

I have received complaints about site traffic dragging mud onto the road. This is an SODC Planning Enforcement matter, however I arranged for OCC to intercede to resolve the issue.

THAMES PATH REPLACEMENT FOOTBRIDGE NEAR RAILWAY LINE

As previously reported, this should have been completed last summer. The bridge has at last been ordered and will be installed early this summer coming, subject to ground conditions. I understand the PC has agreed to contribute to the costs.

THAMES PATH DIVERSION BETWEEN HENLEY AND SHIPLAKE

As previously reported, the Environment Agency has finally admitted liability for repair of the bridge but has no funding and a solution is a long way off.

TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOTPATH CLOSURE OF FOOTPATH-7 (GRID SU77947873)

OCC has temporarily closed Footpath-7 until June whilst emergency works are considered, as the surface has collapsed. Network Rail has stated that a minor works order has been raised and they are liaising with the EA to register an exemption for the works. Works can only take place when water levels are a lot lower.

FMS ENQ23983475: POTHOLE ON CHURCH LANE

At the request of the PC, I asked OCC for a ball-park figure if the PC was to fund the cost of resurfacing the lane. Officers have advised that it would be in the range of £50-65k. I would be grateful for an update on the PC's position.

METAL HOARDING ON CHURCH LANE

In response to an enquiry from Cllr Head, I received the following response from OCC:

"I can confirm a member of my team has already visited the workmen on site and spoken to landowner responsible about a hoarding license which they are currently submitting. This should also speed up the remedial repairs to the unsafe wall/fence line. I have no concern regarding vehicle clipping the footings as there's plenty of width available for both vehicles and pedestrians to pass safely."

FMS ENQ23972527: FLOODING OPPOSITE HAILEYWOOD FARM

The gully emptying crew attended the location again on 06/03/24. However, further works are required. OCC has now referred the matter to SODC Enforcement as the Shiplake Meadows developer is not maintaining the drainage ditch. I have emphasised to OCC that there are road maintenance issues as well as drainage issues.

CAMERAS ON NEW ROAD

I received reports that CCTV cameras had been installed on New Road, but they have now been removed. I have asked OCC officers if they have any knowledge of this matter.