

REPORT TO SHIPLAKE PARISH COUNCIL **NOVEMBER 2022** FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

GENERAL OCC REPORT

LIBDEM/GREEN/LABOUR WAR ON MOTORISTS CONTINUES IN OXFORD

A wide range of initiatives are either in place or being consulted upon. These include:

- ZEZ (Zero Emissions Zone): Non-electric cars are charged or fined if they enter the area
- LTNs (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods): Through traffic is blocked from certain areas
- Traffic Filters: The city is to be split into four sectors and cars without permits will be unable to travel directly from one sector to another
- Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs): Cars without permits are fined if they park in certain areas
- WPL (Workplace Parking Levy): Businesses are to be taxed if they provide parking spaces for employees

While understanding that traffic is a huge issue in Oxford, the Conservative Opposition wonders whether this is overkill and is concerned about the amount of Council time and Council Tax money being devoted to Oxford in comparison to towns and villages.

OXFORD ZERO EMISSIONS ZONE (ZEZ) GENERATES £120,000 IN FEES & FINES

The Cabinet Member in charge of Oxfordshire's highways insists the ZEZ scheme is not being used as a cash cow. Rolled out as a pilot on a handful of city centre roads in February, the ZEZ scheme sees automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras police charges between £2 and £10 for any vehicles that produce emissions. The prices will double from August 2025. The charges apply between 7am and 7pm every day on Bonn Square, Queen Street, Cornmarket Street, part of Market Street, Ship Street, St Michael's Street, New Inn Hall Street and Shoe Lane. It is set to be extended to cover much of the city centre next year, subject to public feedback.

HIGHWAYS OFFICERS DEVOTE LOTS OF TIME & EFFORT RESTORING LTN BARRIERS

The Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in Oxford remain unpopular with many residents and the barriers are frequently vandalised at great cost to the council. Cabinet Member Andrew Gant said: *"We will continue to make safe and reinstate all damaged bollards that have been forcibly knocked down or uprooted. Vandalism of this kind is a serious criminal offence and correcting it takes a lot of time and effort from our highway officers."*

TRAFFIC FILTER PLAN TO SPLIT OXFORD INTO FOUR SECTORS

The intention is to create four 'Sectors' within the city: North, South, West and East. When the traffic filters are operating, for cars without a permit, movement within each sector is unrestricted, but direct movement between sectors is not possible and requires use of the ring road. Affected motorists will face much longer journey times and distances. The intention is to force a change in behaviour.

WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY

The plan is to tax businesses on every parking space they provide to employees. The decision whether or not to pass this charge on to the employee rests with the company.

CONSERVATIVES ATTEMPT TO SAFEGUARD OF COUNCILLORS' PRIORITY FUND

Conservatives successfully moved a motion at October Full Council to request that as part of the Budget process, the administration gives full consideration to extending the Councillors' Priority Fund, which is due to expire at the end of the year.

LIBDEMS PASS MOTION TO CUT VAT

The LibDems put forward a motion to Full Council in October stating Government should immediately introduce various subsidies and cut VAT to 17.5%. The motion was passed despite Conservatives pointing out that whatever the merits or not of the proposal, the administration was once again wasting council resources trying to get involved in central government issues way beyond the council's remit. Councillors are not junior MPs and they should focus on local matters. It is believed the motion was centrally generated by LibDem HQ as almost identically worded motions have been debated at other LibDem councils.

LIBDEM/GREEN/LABOUR ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES VEGANISM CAMPAIGN

Conservatives moved a motion at October Full Council to put a brake on the administration's veganism campaign but were unsuccessful.

HOMELESSNESS IN OXFORDSHIRE

Housing associations, charities and local authorities in Oxfordshire have come together to embark on a programme to help tackle homelessness in the county. OCC has helped to form the Oxfordshire Homeless Alliance, commissioning partners to improve homeless services by taking a collaborative approach to support those experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

COUNCIL BUDGET

This year, the government is not expected to hold a spending review, so government funding will not keep pace with inflation, leading to a predicted funding shortfall of over £30 million next year. OCC is also estimating around £20m of other demand-led pressures, which include: the growing nationwide costs of supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities; the rising cost of social care and care placements for both children and adults; and a national shortage of social care workers leading to a reliance on agency staff.

OCC DECLINES THE GOVERNMENT'S INVESTMENT ZONES INVITE

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of OCC, has written a formal letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up to explain why OCC has decided not to bid to be involved in Whitehall's investment zones initiative. Given that this decision has been made, the Opposition is questioning why time and money is to be wasted at Full Council in November debating a motion praising the decision.

UPDATED PARKING STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS APPROVED

On Tuesday 18 October, OCC's cabinet approved an updated guide for parking standards for new developments. It means developers will need to work collaboratively with the council to help achieve the targets set in the [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (LTCP), which was adopted earlier this year. The LTCP aims create a net zero transport system in Oxfordshire by 2040, improving health and wellbeing, tackling the climate emergency, reducing private vehicle use, and prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport. While supporting many of these objectives, Conservatives are questioning how the restrictions will apply in rural areas where residents are still very much dependent on the private car.

SPECIFIC OCC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

GIGACLEAR ULTRAFast BROADBAND INSTALLATION

I am unclear what Gigaclear is proposing and have asked the OCC Broadband officer for clarification about how the Gigaclear project ties in with the Airband project.

'THE BEECHES' UNFINISHED ENTRANCE & FOOTPATH

The OCC Highways Engineer met with the developer on site last week. The developer blames the contractor for the unfinished works but the arbitrator found in favour of the contractor. The developer states he hopes to have a new contractor appointed by the end of the year. If the work does not progress, OCC will complete the work and draw down the bond it holds.

FLOOD FROM WATER ON READING ROAD: FMS ENQ22917578

I have been pressing Highways to resolve this issue which is causing problems for residents.

POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF LEVEL CROSSING FOR RAILWAY MAINTENANCE WORKS

OCC officers have chased Network Rail for an update but have received no response to date.

MEMORIAL AVENUE/PLOUGH LANE SPEEDING ISSUES & FMS ENQ22924787: 'WIG-WAG' SIGN NEAR SHIPLAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Subsequent to Cllr Head's meeting, OCC officer Jon Beale emailed proposals to Cllr Head on 11 October 2022 12:40.

OBSTRUCTIONS UNDER RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER MILL LANE

OCC has put a notice on the objects under the railway bridge stating they must be removed by the owner, or OCC will remove them. Some of the obstructions have now been removed.

FOOTBRIDGE OVER THAMES PATH

The bridge needs a full replacement and OCC is looking at options including a steel fabricated bridge or a recycled plastic boardwalk (a boardwalk probably won't have any handrails). OCC is getting quotes for both, with the intention of delivering next summer, budgets allowing.

RETIREMENT VILLAGE P21/S4102/RM

I have again been in contact with OCC officers and they have again confirmed there is a breach but seem reluctant to take any action as they state the matter is progressing satisfactorily, although they are in consultation with OCC legal advisors.

RETIREMENT VILLAGE P21/S4102/RM: SPEED LIMIT CHANGES

The consultation shows that 85% of respondents, including the police, oppose the change in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. Despite this, officers are recommending the change goes ahead. The decision was to be made by the Cabinet Member on Thursday 13th October but at the meeting he agreed to defer the decision due to various outstanding matters. The deferred meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17th November but a further deferral has been requested by the PC and me.

GENERAL SODC REPORT

SODC HQ MOVE

As previously reported, SODC has now moved out of Milton Park into temporary accommodation owned by VOWH DC in Abingdon. Conservatives are pressing that this move should be made permanent and the vanity project of building a brand-new HQ in Didcot should be abandoned.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

‘THE BEECHES’ ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATION

At the request of residents, I instigated an Enforcement investigation on 6th July. As previously advised, I was disappointed to discover the case wasn't assigned to an officer until 12th August. I have pressed officers for an update and they have stated the developer is actively trying to resolve the issues.

‘POPLAR EYOT’ ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATION

It is now a year since the PC reported this matter. Officer engagement was very slow and it took eight months for an officer to be assigned to the case. Further site work continued. Officers advised in August that a retrospective application was going to be submitted shortly, so no enforcement action would be taken for the time being. As no application has been submitted, I chased officers for an update. They said the delay relates to the Flood Risk Assessment.

LAND ADJACENT THE TOWER HOUSE READING ROAD (IRIS HOUSE AND THE PINES)

As previously reported, SODC officers have apologised for failing to properly word the planning conditions, meaning that the houses can be sold and new residents move in prior to the access path to the village being completed. It appears that the ‘temporary hoarding’ has now had a gate complete with combination lock fitted to it. The PC may wish to follow up the response it had from the developer when it enquired about the ‘temporary hoarding’.

P21/S4271/RM WYEVALE 40 DWELLINGS

The developer has submitting an amended RM application and I am broadly supportive of the proposals. However, I strongly object to the plan to extend the 30mph limit towards Henley.

P21/S5382/FUL WYEVALE 55 DWELLINGS

I have again queried why the refusal notice has still not be issued and have been assured it will be issued before the end of November.

P20/S2808/DIS: THAMES FARM

As previously reported, after a meeting with TW and an extensive exchange of emails, the TW response to the request to commence tree replanting was as follows:

“We have been advised that in order for the tree planting to be successful the ground remediation within a certain proximity should be completed first. We are committed to the development and hope to start ground remediation as soon as we can and therefore commence the tree planting accordingly.”

I asked the SODC Deputy Chief Executive to reply to TW stating that this response is unsatisfactory, and query that if the highway is safe, why it isn't safe to plant trees along the highway (planting within the site can wait). A further response from TW is awaited.