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Strong focus on protection as the county council retains ‘good’ Ofsted rating for children’s services

Despite the increase in cases of children at risk of neglect and abuse, the service has received an overall ‘Good’ rating from Ofsted. This is the third time running the county council has received the ‘Good’ rating after an inspection by Ofsted, the children’s services inspectorate.

The Ofsted report praised the way staff had dealt with a huge rise in the number of children needing protection from abuse and neglect since 2015, and the rise in admissions to care, driven by better reporting and awareness by people working with children and families, including schools, police, nurses and GPs.

Ofsted praised the council and found that when children are at risk of harm, prompt action is taken to understand their circumstances and protect them. Children in care and care leavers receive a good service.

The report adds: “Children and families are increasingly benefiting from a range of early help services. The creation of locality community support services (LCSS) ensures the delivery of a range of well-coordinated services...This has had a positive impact on preventing children’s needs from escalating.”

County council awaits Highways England announcement on Expressway corridor options

Oxfordshire County Council has previously supported the concept of the proposed new road link from Oxford to Cambridge - known as the Expressway. We recognise the opportunities it could bring to support growth and development and enhance innovation and smart technology along the Oxford to Cambridge corridor.

Highways England is expected to make an announcement on its preferred corridor for the Expressway in early summer. The county council believes there are some important principles, which should be integral to the corridor selection and decision-making process.

The Expressway should not use existing local roads or pull traffic directly onto local road networks. This includes making sure the Expressway does not increase pressure on the existing, already overstretched highway network, such as the section of the A34 through central Oxfordshire – between the Lodge Hill junction and the Bicester Road junction, east of Kidlington. We would welcome a solution that enabled this section of the A34 to function as part of the Oxford ring road.

We are engaging with Highways England on these principles and on the technical details for the Expressway once the preferred corridor has been identified, and we will keep Oxfordshire residents, communities and businesses informed on progress. An announcement on the preferred corridor option is expected in the summer.

More information on Highways England's Oxford to Cambridge Study, including the Corridor Options A, B and C, can be viewed [here](#).

New contributions policy allows savings to be reinvested in adult care

Changes to the way people contribute to the cost of their care in Oxfordshire would see some people charged more so that resources can be targeted better at those who cannot afford to pay and would bring the county more in to line with how things operate elsewhere in England.

All councils charge for care to recover the costs incurred in line with the Care Act. This means people receiving social care across the nation may be expected to contribute towards the cost of their care depending on their financial circumstances.

Currently the council charges the same flat rate all over the country. In future it would **charge what care costs to deliver in each local community – and this differs from place to place.**

The council's cabinet approved these changes on 22 May 2018, and all money saved – estimated to be £1.8m per year – will be used to provide social care for people with significant care needs and who are unable to pay for care themselves.

- The council provides Adult Social Care to 6800 clients.
- Of these, 4800 make a contribution towards the cost of their care and 2000 currently make no contribution.
- Of the 4800 who contribute, the council estimates that about 1700 people would see an increase in their contribution to the cost of their care. For the majority the increase would be no more than £30 per week.
- About 1300 would be better off (saving about £10 per week). Around 1800 would see no change at all

Drivers warned about delays as next phase of Access to Headington begins

Work has started on Headley Way in Oxford and the county council has done as much as possible to warn road users of the impact on journey times, including working with the John Radcliffe hospital to ensure patients and visitors know what to expect.

Traffic problems are inevitable during this phase of the works, but the county council is confident that the improvements to the flow of traffic and benefits to cyclists and pedestrians will be significant. Temporary lights have been installed on the junction of Marsh Lane/Headley Way for three weeks whilst central islands are removed and reinstated with a temporary road surface.

Temporary lights will then move to the JR access roundabout on 4 June for two weeks, whilst the existing pedestrian crossing is disconnected and removed along with the remaining central islands and reinstated with a temporary road surface. After that the remainder of the works will be delivered under narrow lanes.

Access to Headington will improve facilities for pedestrians, public transport and cyclists and will include junction upgrades, improved cycling facilities and pedestrian crossings. A total of £12.5m is being invested. It will be delivered as a series of individual pieces of work. This means that the timings can be coordinated with other work that may need to be done in the area in order to minimise disruption.

Details of the Access to Headington scheme are available [here](#).

Residents weigh in over HGVs on rural roads

The county council's partnership approach with local residents to encourage them to report sighting of HGVs on the county's weight-restricted rural roads and bridges is paying off.

Three out of four recent successful magistrates' court prosecutions for operating an HGV in a weight restricted area have come from resident reports to the county council's website. We have highlighted this success in the local media and via social media to encourage public reporting.

Trading standards say there are huge advantages in the public being the 'eyes' while officers concentrate on the legal administration aspects of enforcement as it allows many more potential breaches to be investigated. Although regular patrols in video-equipped marked vehicles still take place.

With the emphasis on prevention rather than prosecution, automatic number plate recognition cameras installed at Newbridge in October last year has resulted in more than 1000 warning letters being sent out. No vehicle owner has re-offended after receiving one.

The public can report HGV vehicles they believe are ignoring weight restriction [here](#).

Care worker recruitment campaign attracts dozens of applicants

A joint [NHS and county council recruitment drive](#) to encourage more people in Oxfordshire to consider a career as a care worker has attracted more applicants in just five months as in the previous two years.

Recruitment and retention was identified as a major barrier to reducing delayed transfers of care from hospitals in a recent health and social care system inspection by the Care Quality Commission.

The recruitment campaign - 'Make a difference every day' - features a number of real life care workers, already supporting people across the county, talking about the rewards of the job and why they would recommend the job to others.

The campaign was jointly run and funded by Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG), Oxfordshire Health NHS Trust, and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) in partnership with Oxfordshire Care Providers Associations.

Find out more about Oxfordshire health and wellbeing at the JSNA conference

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides information about Oxfordshire's population and the factors affecting health, wellbeing, and social care needs. We are in the process of planning the JSNA Stakeholder Conference which will be held on 18 June 2018 in the Assembly Room of Oxford Town Hall from 12pm to 4pm.

The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for 2018](#) presents key headlines from the most recent analysis of the data and includes population change, wider determinants of health (employment, housing, education, environment), health conditions and causes of death, lifestyles and service use.

The conference offers the opportunity to discuss the findings of the 2018 JSNA and help us to shape the 2019 JSNA report. To find out more or book a place, contact jsna@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Better Broadband for Oxfordshire - fibre broadband cabinets recently delivered

Oxfordshire is now just short of 96.5% superfast broadband coverage, increasingly enabling digital infrastructure in the most rural parts of the county, with adoption of the newly available fibre broadband services running at over 54%, which is well above national average. Cabinets in the following areas have recently been enabled:

Cherwell

- Main Road area, Swalcliffe
- Main Street area, Sibford Ferris
- Stratford Road area, Wroxton

South Oxon

- Howland Business Park, Thame
- Park Lane area, Maidensgrove
- Shillingford Road area, Shillingford Hill
- Sires Hill area, North Moreton
- York Road area, West Hagbourne

Vale of White Horse

- Gloucester Street area, Faringdon
- High Street area, Long Wittenham
- Holloway Road area, Great Coxwell

West Oxon

- Ball Lane area, Tackley

Oxford City

- George Street area, Oxford

Major transport projects update

Detailed updates on all major road projects being undertaken across Oxfordshire can be found at Annex A. The highlights are:

- The next phase of Access to Headington main works started on Monday 14 May.
- Connections to Oxford Station final phase of works completed in April on Speedwell Street, after which the bus build out change on Queen Street has started.
- Science Vale Cycle Network lighting column installation on Milton Road is scheduled for early June 2018 subject to agreement with network management.
- Backhill A4130 toucan crossing works have completed but the crossing cannot be formally opened until after the electrical connections are finished by the relevant utility company.

Further updates on all road schemes can be found on our Travel Choices website, including progress, road closures and diversions and expected completion dates;
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/travelchoices>

For more information please contact Owen Jenkins, Director for Infrastructure Delivery, 01865 815845, Owen.Jenkins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Below is a table showing start/end construction dates for those major projects in construction, scheduled for construction within 24 months, or largely construction ready but awaiting land purchase.

Dates specified within this report are current programme dates which are subject to change if there is an unforeseen event/s including bad weather.

Further information for many of these projects can be found on the Oxfordshire County Council website, www.oxfordshire.gov.uk. Links have also been provided in the project summaries where appropriate.

Please also see www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/travelchoices for guidance on current works and travel options.

Project	Start date	End date
Backhill Tunnel, Milton, A4130 (phases 1-5)	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Access to Headington (Phases 1-2 – The Slade)	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Harwell Link Road	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Access to Headington (Phase 3 & 4 – Headley Way)	28 March 2018	30 March 2019

Connections to Oxford Station (Phase 2)	8 January 2018	20 April 2018
Oxpens, Oxford Riverside Route to City Centre (Phase 2)	8 January 2018	August 2018
Science Vale Cycle Routes	20 November 2017	31 March 2018
Woodstock Road, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter	25 June 2018	31 August 2018
Botley Road	21 October 2019	24 July 2020
Didcot Northern Perimeter Road	14 October 2019	24 September 2020
Harwell Campus Entrance, A4185	3 September 2018	21 December 2018
Loop Farm A40 – A44 Link Road	15 August 2018	15 September 2019
A40 Bus Lane & Eynsham P&R	22 April 2019	25 September 2020
A34 Hinksey Hill Bus Lane	26 July 2019	10 July 2020
A34 Lodge Hill Slips	4 March 2019	4 May 2020
Featherbed Lane and Steventon Lights	Subject to land acquisition, possibly requiring compulsory purchase	

Projects in Construction

Backhill Tunnel, Milton, A4130 [Phase 1 -5: COMPLETE. Phase 5: April 2018]

The official opening of the tunnel was on 17 November 2017. Two additional items of scope have been requested; Phase 4 to provide a new shared path was completed end-October, and Phase 5 civils works were completed in April 2018 to provide a new toucan crossing. Electrical connections will follow. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/backhill-pedestrian-and-cycle-tunnel

Access to Headington [Phase 1-2: COMPLETE. Phase 3-5: 28 Mar 18 – 30 Mar 2019]

The improvements are being implemented in phases. Phase 1 and 2 of the works has completed. Phase 3 Headley Way and Phase 4 started 14 May 2018 with advanced works to starting in late April.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/access-headington

A34 Harwell Link Road Phase 1 [4 Jan 17 – 28 Mar 18]

The main construction works started in January 2017 and has been completed ahead of programme, and following some snagging opened on 28 March 2018.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/harwell-link-road

Connections to Oxford Station – [Phase 1 - Queen Street COMPLETE Phase 2: 8 Jan 18 – Aug 2018]

Phase 1 completed ahead of Westgate opening. Junction changes (phase 2) to complete in May 2018 including changes to Speedwell Street junction and a bus build-out in Queen Street. Improvements to the junction at Worcester Street will be completed as part of this project during the summer of 2019 but must be coordinated with Woodstock Road to minimise impact on congestion. The works date will be confirmed shortly.

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/connections-oxford-station>

Oxpens, Oxford Riverside Route to City Centre [Phase 1: COMPLETE. Phase 2: 8 Jan 18 – 22 Aug 18]

Construction has been split into two phases, and the first phase is the reconstruction of the towpath, which completed in October 2016. Phase 2 is a series of further towpath improvements which has already started. Any new bridge will require additional planning and be implemented as part of a separate project.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/riverside-cycle-route-project

Projects scheduled for construction within two years

Woodstock Road, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter [25 Jun 18 – 31 Aug 18]

Planned works to improve footways and reduce impact of carriageway, in partnership with the University. Detailed design complete and works will be coordinated to with maintenance works and avoid conflicts with Worcester Street and Access to Headington works.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/woodstock-road-projects

Botley Road [21 Oct 19 – 24 Jul 20]

New scheme being reported on following a successful National Productivity Investment Fund bid award. Designing has started. Existing proposed upgrades to cycling and bus facilities are currently being reviewed following the completion of surveys to identify constraints and opportunities based on the previous high-level design. Key stakeholder engagement will continue in the summer of 2018, and Public Consultation will follow in the autumn of 2018.

Project webpage to go live in June 2018

Didcot Northern Perimeter Road [14 Oct 19 – 24 Sep 20]

Preliminary Design and modelling is in progress so a planning application can be submitted. The funding required to progress the project through to the end of construction is £15.2m, South Oxfordshire District Council has been awarded £6.2m from the Homes & Communities Agency to help progress this.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/didcot-northern-perimeter-road

Harwell Campus Entrance, A4185 [3 Sep 18 – 21 Dec 18]

The project is to deliver an improved junction for the A4185 and Thomson Avenue. A signalised junction would provide the most suitable solution with least land take. The project has completed Preliminary Design.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/harwell-campus-entrance>

Loop Farm A40 – A44 Link Road [15 Aug 18 – 15 Sep 19]

Planning and transport modelling work on the project has been extended in order to take account of Local Plan work currently being undertaken by West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council. This additional planning assessment work has extended the timetable of the project by several months. Design work has been paused until the completion of this assessment.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/a40-a44-strategic-link-road-loop-farm

A40 Bus Lane & Eynsham Park & Ride [24 Sep 18 – 25 Sep 20]

A new 5km eastbound bus lane from a new Eynsham P&R site at the junction of Cuckoo Lane to the Duke's Cut Bridge / Loop Farm junction. The Preliminary Design is being progressed with further investigations being undertaken on more complex programmes of construction, in particular on the proposed foot and cycle bridges and commercial Park & Ride development.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/a40

Hinksey Hill Bus Lane [26 Jul 19 – 10 Jul 20]

The project will unlock capacity, particularly for express bus services through extending the A34 Northbound off-slip road with bus priority, widening carriageway around interchange, and widening A423 eastbound approach to Old Abingdon Road, for all traffic. Traffic modelling is informing the optimum design and is forecast to be completed in May 2018, with 3 options to be assessed over the summer before agreeing a preferred option for public consultation.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/hinksey-hill-interchange>

Lodge Hill A34 Slips [4 Mar 19 – 4 May 20]

The project will design and construct south-facing slips with roundabout to form diamond interchange A34 / A4183 at Lodge Hill. Preliminary Design is progressing alongside land purchase discussions.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/lodge-hill-interchange>

Construction ready projects awaiting land acquisition

Featherbed & Steventon Lights

Upgrading Featherbed Lane and signal junctions at either end to improve capacity and support future growth. The design is complete. Evidence is currently being gathered to prepare a Compulsory Purchase Order due to a lack of progress with acquisitions directly from land owners, and appropriate legal advice is being sought. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/featherbed-lane-and-steventon-lights