**October 2017**

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1. **Westgate Oxford opening – travel and transport plans in place**



*Artist’s impression of Oxford’s new city centre retail and entertainments complex*

Oxford’s new £440 million city centre shopping centre opens on 24 October and will be a major focal point for the city and county as a whole.

With a predicted 11 million additional visitors coming to Oxford, to Westgate each year, the county council has been actively working with the developers, city council, bus companies and cycling groups to put in place measures that will promote sustainable transport to and from the new centre.

The county council, and city council, are keen to ensure travel arrangements work for people who live and work here as well as for visitors.

Measures being taken include promoting Park & Ride as the ideal choice to travel to Westgate – there will be new advance warning and entry points signs and a single ticket option covering both parking and the bus ride; 11 new bus stops introduced alongside Westgate with re-routing of some services, space for around 1,000 cycles at the site, and display screens on highways showing the number of parking spaces available at Westgate as people drive in plus information on journey planning at Westgate and on its new website <https://westgateoxford.co.uk/>

Meanwhile, some buses will return to Queen Street for a trial period, although reduced from 55 per hour before construction work started to 29 per hour. Monitoring will take place to ensure there are no issues, particularly with regards to safety to pedestrians and cyclists.

1. **Housing Infrastructure Fund bids submitted**

Following the cabinet’s decision to support the development of Housing Infrastructure Fund bids for Didcot Garden Town (£170m), West Oxfordshire (£135m) and North of Oxford (£150m), pending further discussions with partners, final bids were submitted on 28 September. The bids were prioritised following the government’s criteria in the order listed here.

The Oxfordshire Growth Board press release [here](http://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-growth-board-backs-infrastructure-funding-bid-to-support-garden-towns-and-villages/) provides more details, as required.

# **An update covering transformation**

**Activity Analysis update**

Earlier in the summer, as part of the Fit for the Future programme, we asked everyone to help us to undertake an activity analysis by completing a short online questionnaire. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete this work, we gathered data for 100 per cent of job roles across the council.

The analysis represented a significant step forward for the council. It enables us to think about how we best serve residents in the future through providing a full understanding of where we are collectively spending our time, and how this compares to similar councils.

PwC worked with us to undertake the analysis and have now provided their initial findings that we set out below:

1. Considerable effort is being put into support services, even though some of these services are outsourced.

2. The Council could be utilising the information it holds about customers more effectively.

3. Significantly less effort is being used to deliver services compared to similar councils.

4. Complex processes, technology and immature digital offerings may be driving some of these characteristics.

5. The strategic direction of the Council could be clearer.

The view is these findings confirm we are on the right track with our approach to Fit for the Future and are looking at the right areas but we need to explore these issues further and to ensure there is sufficient focus and pace to address them.  It is for this reason we have engaged with PwC to work in partnership with us to help us deliver our programme.  Over the next three months we will complete the following work:

**Strategic Direction**  
Through the council’s Corporate Plan we will set out the strategic direction of this council, what our priorities are, and to be clear on what we are seeking to achieve.  We need to be clear what sort of council we aim to be.

**Our Operating Model**   
There will be a number of staff workshops that will consider how we can make the necessary improvements to our operating model to specifically set out how the organisation addresses matters such as customer services, internal processes, use of technology and provision of information.

**Fit for the Future Programme**   
We have already invested considerable effort in establishing and supporting an organisation wide transformation programme including through establishing a new programme management office (PMO). We will now look to build on this approach through reviewing our existing programmes and using the results from the activity analysis to ensure our focus is on the right areas.

**Contracting and Procurement**

The activity analysis also highlighted a need to look at our contract management and procurement processes and this work will now be undertaken to ensure that we maximise future value for money through our commissioned services.

**Digital**

The analysis identified there are opportunities to further improve our approach to the way we use technology in the future to deliver our services and give you simpler systems to help you to perform your roles.  We are already doing really good work in this area and will be encouraging staff and councillors to become engaged in this work as it progresses.

This phase of work is of immense importance for determining the future direction of the council.  We will be working in strong partnership with PwC and with the active involvement of staff and councillors across the whole of the council. In particular there will be many workshops that will focus on developing the best solutions for Oxfordshire that will serve us into the future. I would like as many people as possible to be involved in this process as is possible.

We will ensure there are regular updates as this work progresses.

This council has much to be proud of.  We are keen to remove as many barriers as possible for us to be able to get on and do our work and for the technology we have to be there to assist and not to hinder us.  That is why it is so important.

# **CAG Oxfordshire Annual Report**

The county council is proud to support the [Community Action Group (CAG) Project Oxfordshire](http://cagoxfordshire.org.uk/)**.** The latest Annual Report for 2016-17 demonstrates that community-led environmental action is thriving throughout the county and providing tangible outputs – both in terms of waste reduction and community cohesion.

There are now 62 active groups in the CAG Oxfordshire Network, 16 of which joined just in the last year.

Across multiple sectors including energy, food, waste and transport the groups held over 2,000 events attended by approximately 80,000 local residents, all of which contributed to over 21,000 volunteer hours going into local communities. This equates to over £280,000 worth of volunteer time.

This broad climate-based activity led to 67 tonnes of waste being prevented and 52 tonnes of carbon emissions being avoided.

The CAG Project in Oxfordshire is currently funded by Oxfordshire County Council (£92,000 a year). The total financial output of the project is over £1.2 million which equates to a 13:1 return on investment. The project also generated over £800,000 of income in grants, sales, donations and community-owned renewables.

Other achievements for the network include winning several awards at the [2017 OCVA awards](http://cagoxfordshire.org.uk/ocva-awards17/) ceremony at Oxford Town Hall and launching a new DEFRA-government approved monitoring and evaluation tool, [ResourceCIT](http://www.resource-cit.co.uk/), which the CAG network is utilising to measure its impact on waste and carbon reduction.

*Should you have any questions regarding the CAG Oxfordshire project please contact:*

*Dr Kerry Lock, Community Engagement Manager:* [*Kerry.lock@resourcefutures.co.uk*](mailto:Kerry.lock@resourcefutures.co.uk)

# **Surveying occupants of recently built homes**

Over the next few weeks the county council will be carrying out a new survey of the occupants of recently built homes in Oxfordshire. We need to do this to obtain data for service planning, forecasting, and future negotiations with developers about the funding of key infrastructure such as schools, roads and other transport improvements. This is the first survey of its kind in Oxfordshire since 2008, hence the need to obtain a more up-to-date understanding of the characteristics of those moving into new homes in the county.

The survey will be conducted via phone, online, and by direct email and we will be assisted in this by a research organisation named Future Thinking. These methods provide better value than a postal response survey.

*This is for information only and should enable you to handle any immediate enquiries you may get about the survey. If you require any further details please contact* [*Julia.clark@oxfordshire.gov.uk*](mailto:Julia.clark@oxfordshire.gov.uk) *or* [*Graham.bentham@oxfordshire.gov.uk*](mailto:Graham.bentham@oxfordshire.gov.uk) *in the council’s Research and Intelligence team.*

1. **Research underway on managing traffic in Oxford**

With or without Westgate Oxford, the city has long had challenges around congestion and managing traffic. An early response was in 1973 when Oxford became the first place in the world to introduce Park & Ride.

Forty five years on and despite welcome prosperity, the problem has not gone away and as council leader, Councillor Ian Hudspeth says, “Doing nothing is not an option”.

Hence this month has seen the start of research and highway modelling to produce a business case for county councillors to consider which will examine so called demand management measures, including the potential introduction of a workplace parking levy, congestion charging or further access restrictions.

At a recent media briefing, reporters were shown a video (see top part of [news release](http://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordgearchange/)) commissioned for discussions with the National Infrastructure Commission. It shows how transport and travel in Oxfordshire could look by 2050 given the right support.

The briefing explained that letters and survey forms were being sent to 1,500 employers in Oxford to understand the number of parking spaces employers provide for their staff. Employers also have the opportunity to take part in face-to-face research exploring the options.

1. **Round up of current campaigns**

Campaigns designed to change behaviour or recruit, for example, are a major feature of the council’s marketing and communications work. We use a range of channels to promote them including social media, newspapers and broadcast media, websites, partners own channels, posters, advertising and internally.

Here are brief details of five campaigns we are currently running/supporting; across public health, adult services, fire and rescue, and libraries.

**Stoptober**

The Public Health England campaign to get people to quit smoking running throughout October is being supported by the council. Special Stoptober themed clinics have been run by the public health team to persuade smokers to give up, including events held in Witney, Abingdon, Cowley and Banbury. Key messages are the health benefits of not smoking but also that not smoking can save you £250 a month. More details from <https://www.smokefreelifeoxfordshire.co.uk/>

**Women firefighter recruitment**

Across fire and rescue services women are significantly under-represented. In Oxfordshire, only 32 out of 530 operational firefighters are female. Chief Fire Officer Simon Furlong has made it a priority to diversify the service, which also has just three firefighters from an ethnic minority background. Taster days for females interesting in joining the service have been set up. Here they will be able to learn first-hand what it is like to be a firefighter and meet some of the women already working for the service.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/taster-day-women>

**World Mental Health Day – 10 October**

Council leader Ian Hudspeth has taken part in an Olympic relay style event to promote the day (being held today – Tuesday), with Oxfordshire Mind. The relay features loose leaves of a book travelling the county featuring contributors’ thoughts and challenges to mental health through pictures, poems and pledges. The council is building on the campaign with a longer term spotlight on mental health as part of focussing on the evidence based five steps we can all take to improve our well-being: Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Give to Others, Take Notice.

**Volunteers to teach digital skills**

A new campaign appealing for digital helper volunteers to teach basic digital skills to people in their community has been launched. Digital helpers teach basic digital skills to people with little or no experience of using computers or the Internet. They volunteer in libraries, providing one-to-one support and encouragement to boost confidence and help people to help themselves.

Visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/digitalhelper](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/digitalhelper) for more information. Potential volunteers can contact their [local library](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/find-library).

**Illegal tobacco sales**

Trading Standards Officers and sniffer dogs Scamp, Phoebe and Yoyo will take to the streets of Banbury on 23 October to ask for the public’s help to tackle the sellers of illegal tobacco. They will be outside Castle Quay Shopping Centre near the Debenhams store.

The roadshow visit is part of a campaign - also including market research and enforcement activities – to tackle a crime known to make it easier for children to start smoking (as the tobacco is sold cheaply) and attractive to criminals who can have links to organised crime groups.

The ‘Keep it Out’ campaign aims to help educate the public about how to spot illegal tobacco; what the dangers are, and how to report sales in their neighbourhood.

More details at [www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk](http://www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk) or people can call the Illegal Tobacco Hotline on 0300 999 6 999 anonymously.

1. **Weight loss programme launched by Public Health**

Help is on hand for those who are obese following the launch of the [Achieve Healthy Weight Loss](https://achieveoxfordshire.org.uk/services/) programme by the county council. Its aim is to help 2,200 obese people a year to lose weight. Obese is classed as people with a BMI (Body Mass Index) of 30 and above.

Figures suggest around 43,000 people are classed as obese in Oxfordshire, with around 60% of the county’s population `overweight`.

Within the free programme aimed at obese people - available at over 50 locations in the county through self-referral or referral from a GP - are:

* free vouchers lasting 12 weeks giving access to Weight Watchers and Slimming World schemes;
* a six month programme combining dietary advice with physical activity;
* for males, access to the Man v Fat initiative. Men are normally under-represented in weight loss programmes and this initiative is tailored to their needs; and
* a web resource for all ages showing you how to lose weight

Being obese increases the risk of ill health through increased likelihood of type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, such as breast cancer and bowel cancer, and strokes. It can also affect your quality of life and lead to psychological problems, such as depression and low self-esteem.

Funding to support the programme has come from the government’s public health grant. The programme is being provided by the healthy lifestyle service provider, Thrive Tribe.

More details at <https://achieveoxfordshire.org.uk> , or call 01865 338060 or email [hello@achieveoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:hello@achieveoxfordshire.org.uk)

1. **Better Broadband update**

**Local Full Fibre Networks**

Following the announcement of a £200m Challenge Fund being set up for Local Full Fibre Networks in the spring 2017 budget, Oxfordshire County Council has been holding initial discussions with DCMS, other Local Authorities, and Suppliers to scope the potential this funding might present in Oxfordshire and the region. We have submitted an Expression of Interest to DCMS describing the benefits this might bring in both a Fibre voucher scheme (demand led), as well as aggregation of public sector sites as a catalyst for additional investment in fibre infrastructure. A first workshop soon will look at possible approaches.

**DEFRA Funding**

Following confirmation that the £200m DEFRA funding for Rural Development is to proceed, the county council has been engaging with DEFRA, DCMS, and the RPA to understand the potential for accessing some of the £30m set aside for rural broadband under this fund. Applications to access this funding are due to open imminently and the council anticipates submitting an application. To this end we are particularly interested in trying to find viable fibre broadband solutions for those farms in Oxfordshire which still struggle to access vital online services.

**Fibre broadband cabinets delivered**

***In September***

Banbury Business Park

Lower Tadmarton

Worminghall Road area, Waterperry

***In August***

Fencott Road area, Murcott

Church Lane area, Pyrton

Lower Heyford Road area, Caulcott, Bicester

Little Wittenham village

1. **Fund for community-run children’s services has re-opened**

More community groups will have the chance to secure start-up funding to run open access children’s services.

The council last year opened a £1m Transition Fund to help schemes for nought to five-year-olds get off the ground at locations formerly served by children’s centres. To date a total of 27 projects have been awarded funding – in addition to open access sessions at the council’s network of eight family centres.

The final round of applications ended earlier this year, with £232,000 remaining unallocated. The council’s Cabinet has agreed to reopen the applications process to enable new groups to come forward with their plans.

The funding criteria will be broadened to allow groups to apply for grants in locations not previously served by children’s centres, or where a children’s centre has been repurposed – for instance, as a nursery.

In a decision deferred from a previous round of applications, the Cabinet also approved a £30,000 grant for the Aspire Oxford community group to run children’s services from Florence Park Children’s Centre.

Community groups interested in finding out more about the Transition Fund and running open access children’s services should contact [localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

1. **Daytime support services changes - reminder**

A reminder that the council’s daytime support services changed on 1 October. You can read more about the changes at <http://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/new-era-for-daytime-support-in-oxfordshire/>

**12. Major transport projects update**

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

* All projects listed on the [Oxfordshire County Council Future Transport Projects](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/future-transport-projects) webpage will start sending quarterly email updates to interested recipients later this summer. We will require recipients to ‘opt-in’ for the e-bulletins to confirm their interest. This is in addition to the e-bulletins currently available for all projects in construction.
* Access to Headington Phase 3 has been pushed to the New Year to account for the Thames Water works in St Clements. The programme is being staggered to manage the traffic impact on the highway network. The works are also being coordinated with third-party projects to minimise the impacts on road users.
* Harwell Link Road construction continues to progress well.

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](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/travel-choices)

**Annex A**

**Major transport projects update**

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](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk). Links have also been provided in the project summaries where appropriate.

Please also see [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/travelchoices](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/travelchoices) for guidance on current works and travel options.

**Construction Dates**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Start date** | **End date** |
| Backhill Tunnel | COMPLETE | COMPLETE |
| Access to Headington (Phase 2 – The Slade) | 24 April 2017 | 13 October 2017 |
| Harwell Link Road | 28 November 2016 | 14 March 2018 |
| Oxpens, Oxford Riverside Route to City Centre (Phase 2) | 11 September 2017 | 30 March 2018 |
| Science Vale Cycle Routes | 20 November 2017 | 31 March 2018 |
| Connections to Oxford Station (Phase 1 - Queen Street) | 14 August 2017 | 30 September 2017 |
| Access to Headington (Phase 3 – Headley Way) | 8 January 2018 | 30 May 2018 |
| Woodstock Road, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter | 8 January 2018 | 11 May 2018 |
| Didcot North Perimeter Road | 14 October 2019 | 24 September 2020 |
| Loop Farm A40 – A44 Link Road | 15 August 2018 | 15 September 2019 |
| A40 Bus Lane | 24 September 2018 | 25 September 2020 |
| A34 Hinksey Hill Bus Lane | 26 July 2019 | 10 July 2020 |
| Lodge Hill Slips | 4 Mar 2019 | 4 May 2020 |
| Featherbed Lane and Steventon Lights | Subject to land acquisition, possibly requiring compulsory purchase | |

**Projects in Construction**

**Access to Headington (Phase 2) [24 Apr 17 – 13 Oct 17]**

The scheme is being implemented in phases. Phase 1 of the works has completed. The delivery of Phase 2 continues, and is scheduled to complete in October 2017. Phase 3 is delayed to account for the traffic impact of Thames Water works in St Clements.  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/access-headington](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/access-headington)

**A34 Harwell Link Road Phase 1 [28 Nov 16 – 14 Mar 18]**

The main construction works started in January 2017 and is progressing well and to programme. The B4493 junction works is 50% complete, and general traffic can continue to use the route as before. The roundabout at the southern end (A417) is complete. [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/harwell-link-road](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/harwell-link-road)

**Milton, A4130 Backhill Tunnel [Phase 1 -3: COMPLETE. Phase 4: October 2017. Phase 5: April 2018]**

Phase 1 to remove UK Atomic Energy Agency pipes beneath the highway was completed in March 2016, and phase 2 to remove the next section of these pipes beneath Network Rail land was completed in October 2017. Phase 3 main works were completed ahead of schedule at the end of August. Two additional items of scope have been requested; Phase 4 to provide a new shared path which is due to be completed end-October, and Phase 5 in April 2018 to provide a new toucan crossing. [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/backhill-pedestrian-and-cycle-tunnel](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/backhill-pedestrian-and-cycle-tunnel)

**Oxpens, Oxford Riverside Route to City Centre [Phase 1: COMPLETE. Phase 2: 11 Sept 17 – 30 Mar 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 towpath improvements, including the provision of a new bridge crossing. Construction for phase 2 is being staggered with the first package of works now complete; however any new bridge would require additional planning and so mean later construction.[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/riverside-cycle-route-project](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/riverside-cycle-route-project)

**Projects scheduled for construction within two years**

**Science Vale Cycle Routes [20 Nov 17 – 31 Mar 18]**

Sustainable transport project providing greater cycle connectivity between Science Vale and the newly improved Didcot station. Plans to provide or improve cycling facilities within eight key corridors linking the urban centres and the Culham Science Centre and Science Vale Enterprise Zone initiative. The preliminary design is complete for the first route and final designs for all routes are scheduled for end of2017 with implementation completed in phases with enabling works in November 2017 subject to Cabinet approval.   
<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/science-vale-cycling-network-schemes>

**Connections to Oxford Station – Phase 1 - Queen Street [14 Aug 17 – 30 Sept 17]**

Works are progressing to prepare for the change in bus routes and accommodate the new bus stops. The Experimental Order for Queen Street is proceeding.  
<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/connections-oxford-station>

**Woodstock Road, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter [8 Jan 18 – 30 May 18]**

Planned works to improve footways and reduce impact of carriageway, in partnership with the University. Detailed design in progress and a meeting is due with the university to finalise the scope, to review the designs, and ensure the works can be achieved within the budget.  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/woodstock-road-projects](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/woodstock-road-projects)

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

Preliminary Design and modelling is in progress and planned for completion in February 2017 when a planning application is proposed to 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](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/didcot-northern-perimeter-road)

**A4185 Harwell Oxford Entrance [3Sep 18 – 21 Dec 18]**

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

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

A new link road parallel to western side of the A34 connecting the A44 and A40 to reduce congestion in northwest Oxford. Preliminary design continues on schedule to complete in December 2017. Surveys are scheduled over the summer to inform the preliminary design. All modelling work is complete however the outputs from the A40 project strategic model may further inform revisions to the preliminary design.  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/a40-a44-strategic-link-road-loop-farm](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/a40-a44-strategic-link-road-loop-farm)

**A40 Eastbound 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 on programme 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](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/a40)

**Hinksey Hill [26 Jul 19 – 10 Jul 20]**

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.

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

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

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 [TBC]**

Upgrading of 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](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/featherbed-lane-and-steventon-lights)