**REPORT TO FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland with Gainfield, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth and Lt. Coxwell MARCH/APRIL 2019**

**FROM CLLR Judith Heathcoat**

**For information, all that is reported and detailed within my monthly report is already within the public domain and thus the media too.**

**GENERAL OCC REPORT**

**£218M SECURED FOR MAJOR TRANSPORT LINKS IN DIDCOT GARDEN TOWN**

OCC, working in close partnership with South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse district councils, was awarded the funding to support the creation of thousands of new jobs and houses, including affordable homes. The successful outcome of the bid was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, in the Spring Statement and is part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) programme. The package of measures has previously been identified in Local Plans to provide the infrastructure that helps delivers homes. The main schemes for developing Didcot are:

* A4130 widening from A34 Milton Interchange towards Didcot;
* A new “Science Bridge” over the A4130, Great Western Railway Line and Milton Road into the former Didcot A Power Station site;
* A new Culham to Didcot river crossing between the A415 and A4130;
* A Clifton Hampden bypass

All schemes include improved segregated walking and cycling routes which will give people real travel choice. The lack of suitable crossings over the railway line and river coupled with the success of the Science Vale area has resulted in heavy congestion. Construction is currently programmed for mid-2021 and completion is expected by March 2024.

**COUNTY COUNCIL BACKS JOINT STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLAN**

OCC supports the aspirations of the [Oxfordshire Plan 2050](https://oxfordshireplan.org/), which was out to consultation until 26 March 2019. As part of the Housing and Growth Deal that the six Oxfordshire councils signed with the government, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 will consider issues such as housing and infrastructure while also keeping and enhancing Oxfordshire’s heritage and natural environment. The plan will also promote public transport, cycling and walking and will make healthy living and wellbeing a priority. The aspirations for Oxfordshire 2050 described in the consultation document also include supporting economic growth, improving housing availability and increasing transport connectivity across the county. In its submission to the consultation OCC’s response included:

* Greater emphasis is on the need for an increase in sustainable modes of travel, and to enhance messages around public health and the environment
* Highlight the need for charging points for electric vehicles into all premises together with full fibre broadband
* Focus on the need to ensure that cycling and walking levels and traffic reduction are radically improved

There will be another round of consultation in the summer, which will cover: place-shaping principles, policy options including levels of housing and employment growth, and broad locations for new development.

**DELIVERING AN OLDER PEOPLE’S STRATEGY FOR OXFORDSHIRE**

A strategy setting out how agencies will work together to deliver a positive future for the county’s older population has been approved. [‘Living Longer, Living Better: Oxfordshire’s Older People’s Strategy’](http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s45088/CA_MAR1919R07%20-%20Older%20Peoples%20Strategy%20-%20Annex%201.pdf) was produced in 2018 following the redesign of the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was developed by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Residents, health and charity organisations, professionals, businesses, the public sector and community groups were engaged in the strategy to ensure it represented the views and aspirations of the population. It includes four themes which emerged during the co-production phase: being physically and emotionally healthy; being part of a strong and dynamic community; housing, homes and the environment; and access to information and care. The draft strategy went out for wider public consultation between December 2018 and February 2019 and received 236 individual responses. Overall, there was strong agreement with the vision, priorities and outcomes. Following approval by the council’s Cabinet and the Health and Wellbeing Board, planning is now under way on delivering the strategy.

**COUNCIL SETS OUT PLANS FOR OXFORDSHIRE’S HOME CARE**

A review that explored options for the future of home care in Oxfordshire has concluded OCC should not provide its own in-house service but should create a new partnership model. The council purchases home care for adults from the independent market – although this accounts for less than 50% of the total home care places provided in the county. The rest is purchased by self-funders. During the 2016/17 period a number of home care providers exited the market and this prompted councillors to ask for a review of the system including an assessment of whether the council should provide its own service. In addition to creating a new model of partnership with the independent market the report also concluded that the council should developing alternative models of home care and improving outcomes for people receiving reablement and reviewing arrangements for contingencies.

**OXFORDSHIRE TO GET BOOST FROM WOMEN’S CYCLE RACE**

Oxfordshire can expect economic and health benefits from hosting a stage of the prestigious OVO Energy [Women’s Tour professional cycling race](https://www.womenstour.co.uk/) on Wednesday, June 12. A stage of the high-profile British cycling event has been secured by the county council and five districts in a three-year deal with race organisers SweetSpot. In a comparable stage in last year’s race in Warwickshire, additional local expenditure linked directly to the event totalled £2m by around 100,000 spectators. Nearly two-thirds (63%) came from outside the county and 67% of spectators said they were inspired to cycle more often. This year’s stage will start in South Oxfordshire and end at Blenheim Palace. Details of the exact route, which will also pass through the Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire, will be revealed in the coming weeks. About 100 professional riders will weave their way through towns, villages and rural areas and race highlights will be screened on ITV4. The race itself starts in Suffolk on 10 June, and takes riders across the country in six stages. **Senior officers within Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service which is within my own Cabinet Portfolio are leading on this work.**

**JOINT COUNCIL CRACKDOWN ON BLUE BADGE FRAUD\***

**I have within my Cabinet Portfolio**, responsibility for Customer Services and I have been 100% supportive of the “crackdown” on Blue Badge Fraud. Undertaking both radio and TV interviews. This campaign has had a high profile across the county. OCC, in partnership with Oxford City Council’s anti-fraud team and Cherwell District Council, recently undertook an on-street operation to detect and prevent abuse of the Blue Badge scheme in Oxfordshire during the middle of March, when there was an amnesty. During the operation, it was estimated that 1,000 Blue Badges were checked across Oxfordshire, with 21 seized. In Oxford, 600 were checked and 12 seized. Blue Badge misuse is a criminal offence and can result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record. A Penalty Charge Notice will also be issued to anyone misusing a disabled parking bay. Many Oxfordshire residents rely on their Blue Badge to remain mobile and independent, enabling them to access goods and services that many of us take for granted. Inappropriate use of disabled parking bays can result in Blue Badge holders missing medical appointments, not being able to get out to buy food, or get to work. Every parking space really does matter remember, the “blue badge” gives people with disabilities them independence.

**SPECIFIC REPORT FOR THE FARINGDON DIVISION**

**Blue Badge fraud, Customer Services in my Cabinet Portfolio, please see above.\***

**Trading Standards** also withn my Cabinet Portfolio I have responsibility for and work has been being undertaken for some considerable time on undercover work with regard to revealing the sale of fake cigarettes and the sale of illicit tobacco. Oxford Magistrate courts had Karzan Roostam in court – he admitted 25 counts relating to the sale and possession of unmarked tobacco products. (I do worry about this trade as it can and does affect all residents, young and old. Tobacco products sold in this way, can affect health and have other consequences for all of us in our communities).

**County Councillors’ Priority Fund** can I advise that this fund is open from the beginning of this local government financial year. I have, again, £15,000 to allocate within the Faringdon Division. I would say that I had “120% bids” to my allocation last year and have therefore carried forward some allocations and this means that my funds going forward this financial year are depleted. So, if you wish to apply for financial support, please submit your application asap!

**Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee (FATAC)** has taken place during March and the diversity of subject matter discussed is very wide spreading but always local, covering a geographic spread from the border with Wiltshire at Shirvenham and then either side of the A420 down to the Botley Road in Oxford. The FATAC is an OCC Advisory Committee and on the Committee sits 2 local County Councillors/2 District Councillors/2 Town Councillors + the Mayor of Faringdon – ex officio/Thames Valley Police/OCC Communities – Highways and a local JP as members. There is public speaking time.

**Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service –** sits within my Cabinet Portfolio of Community Safety which also includes – Trading Standards/Gypsy & Travellers and Emergency Protection Unit. I have to say I enjoy this Portfolio so much as it reaches out to every member of our Oxfordshire communities from OFRS undertaking “Safe and Well visits” to visit those vulnerable within our communities to Trading Standards checking those who drive and break weight restrictions, sell illicit tobacco, etc., examination of the Gypsy and Travellers encampments and the EPU who very obviously look after our protection with regard to terrorism etc. I try to visit the fire stations across the county with the senior officers of OFRS to visit our retained crew. This last month I spent the evening with the Watlington crew.

**OFRS** supported **”The Place”** with a car wash. It was a superbly organised event and it was very busy at the fire station with may car owners wanting to get their cars washed in a good cause. The monies raised are divided 50/50 with the charity – “The Place” and the Fire Fighters Charity. The Faringdon Fire Station is of course on call and during the car wash did not, fortunately, receive a “blue light” alert. However, when invited out for a refreshing drink after all their labours washing cars, the “non-alcoholic” drinks were waiting to be “supped” and the firefighters were called out on a blue light incident. I might say that the firefighters had 3 “shouts” during the evening and night after the car wash – the firefighters were very tired by the end of the day!

**LGA Fire Conference – Brighton** – 11-13th March inclusive. There are some 300+ people attending this annual conference – elected members, Fire Chiefs, FBU members and MP’s. The timetable was very busy and I listened to many presentations and looked at many displays. The unfortunate occurrence was the weather as the storms affecting the south coast affected Brighton enormously and the power of the wind and the wildness of the sea was quite scary.

**Faringdon - Civic Service** was held during March at All Saints Church and I attended along with other councillors and dignitaries. The service was well attended with local folk and it was good to share a “cuppa” after the service to talk to each other!

**“Consumer Challenge Quiz”** – I attended both as the local Faringdon Member and as the Deputy Leader of OCC. This Quiz is fantastic and I have attended it on many occasions over the last 22 years that I have been a County Councillor! Young people with special educational needs from schools across the county including of course “Fitzwarren” school in Wantage where local Faringdon students take part and pit their wits against the quiz master, answering questions relating to “trading standards” and the safeguarding of the consumer. The competition is held at Unipart and the setting is not only good but the hospitality given by Unipart is superb. I am always amazed at the knowledge of these youngsters!

**Thames Valley Fire Control Service –** I attended this quarterly meeting which rotates from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Service to Oxford Fire and Rescue Service, to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service where this last meeting was held. The control room servicing the three fire services is in “steady state” and is not only state of the art but also unique in England. I also attend the Thames Valley Collaboration Meeting on the same day where TVP and OFRS are ensuring that their estate is “joined” together on one site. That’s a police station and a fire station working out of one building! Faringdon fire station is currently on the table for such a merger.

My next surgery is on Saturday 6th April in the Faringdon Library from 1000-1130hrs. If you wish to contact me and are unable to attend the surgery then I can be reached by [Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or on 01367 241468.

Judith Heathcoat

C/Cllr Faringdon Division (Faringdon, Buckland with Gainfield, Littleworth, Faringdon, Lt Coxwell, Gt Coxwell, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings)

March/April 2019