**REPORT TO THE FARINGDON DIVISION (Buckland, Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Faringdon, Gainfield, Gt Coxwell, Littleworth and Lt Coxwell) NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018**

**FROM CLLR Judith Heathcoat**

**GENERAL OCC REPORT**

**COUNCIL BUDGET**

The council’s initial proposals for the 2019/2020 budget will be reviewed by the Performance Scrutiny Committee during December. A key element is the plan to invest up to £120m in roads and schools – a ‘growth dividend’ as more households mean more Council Tax revenue in future years. Tough decisions in the past have created a route to financial stability at a time when other councils face financial threats. There are new ‘Transformation’ plans being developed to completely redesign the council to reduce running costs. Making financial savings will enable OCC to support the growing number of vulnerable children and adults – more vulnerable children are coming into council care, both locally and nationally, creating financial pressures. Protecting children remains OCC’s top priority.

**HOUSING AND GROWTH DEAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME**

The Oxfordshire Growth Board has published details of the infrastructure projects to receive funding in Year 1 and Years 2-5 of the Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal, signed in April 2018. The total £150 million of Growth Deal funding has been earmarked for specific projects. This forward funding is helping unlock projects that will benefit from developer contributions, delivering schemes valued at over £480 million in total, excluding costs of the major rail projects, which are still to be confirmed. I attend these meetings and although I sit in the public gallery, I hear discussion so should I be required to substitute for the Leader I am well informed.

**OCC CALLS FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY ON THAMES WATER’S RESERVOIR PLAN**

Residents’ interests come first – that was the resolute message from OCC last month as its cabinet called for a public inquiry on Thames Water’s plans for a new reservoir. The council has concerns about the size and need for the proposed reservoir to the southwest of Abingdon, between Steventon, East Hanney and Marcham. It is also concerned about the length of time Thames Water has set itself to reduce leakages. Further clarity is sought from Thames Water on whether other potential sites have been fully assessed across the southeast region. Only when these details are provided in the form of a regional water resource plan for the south east, will the council be able to decide on whether to back the principle of having a reservoir at this location. This is the second consultation held by Thames Water – the county council and others demanded earlier this year that a further consultation should take place and Thames Water agreed to this in the summer. I have a sense of déjà vu with regard to this proposal as this project has been on the agenda twice before and I remember fighting against the development of a reservoir firstly, when I was a District Councillor

**HIGHWAYS DEFECTS UPDATE**

As reported last month, the county council has increased the amount of relatively small-scale work it does to put right local roads that are suffering from potholes, cracks and worn out tarmac. The number of completed defect repairs between January and October this year is 37219. My Division has seen a lot of re-surfacing locally together with safety work on the A420 – I have championed this much needed work with officers.

**SALTING, GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE**

December 1st marks the start of meteorological winter. Live updates on gritting and snow clearing can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salting-and-snow-clearance> Details about how community groups can request salt bins can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/salt-and-grit-bins>

**WINTER IN OXFORDSHIRE**

OCC provides a useful guide about how to keep safe, how to be healthy and how to be prepared during the winter months. It can be found here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/node/2782>

**SPECIFIC REPORT FOR FOR THE FARINGDON DIVISION**

At my usual monthly surgery on 3rd November I had a vexed and sensitive issue to deal with regarding land ownership/highways in the town and inconsiderate parking leading into Dove Court. Residents of Dove Court are being affected by car drivers parking on double yellow lines and parking in front of the electricity sub-station where there is a notice specifically advising drivers not to park! I chair Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee and inconsiderate parking is discussed repeatedly. Equally, I have written articles in the Faringdon Folly News asking people to park not only considerately but legally. Why do normal law-abiding citizens continue to park illegally and make life difficult and frequently dangerous for other road users and pedestrians?

I have attended a FEAT (Faringdon Education Activities Trust) – a small Trust which supports local children and teenagers with small grants. I have been a Trustee of this for many years and it gives me pleasure that many local organisations and individuals have benefitted from the grants that FEAT distributes. If you have a youth organisation that may wish for a grant to support them, please do contact me, for example the local Brownies and the golf team at the Faringdon Community College have received grants.

This last full Council day saw on our order paper a motion, with regard to promoting and supporting cycling across the county the public gallery was full once supporters came into County Hall from the cold where there had been TV cameras and local radio on hand to speak to supporters of the motion – there was also two individual cyclists who spoke in favour of the motion. The Motion was passed unanimously and I was pleased to advise Farcycles of this. Farcycles will be benefitting from a grant from Oxfordshire County Council under the “Innovation Fund Scheme of £11,470 which will help this group to enrich their training programme and to buy specialist equipment.

Early in November, I attended as the Cabinet Member with the portfolio that includes Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for a “hot debrief” by HMICFRS (Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service). OFRS has recently been inspected by HMICFRS This inspection particularly explores the work done by the fire service on the prevention and protection programme. It was recognised by the inspectors the benefits of OFRS sitting within the County Council and the contribution the service makes to Adult Social Care with the “Safe and Well” visits within the community plus the safeguard work that they also undertake.

I have attended a conference, held annually, for “Safe Drive Stay Alive” a hard-hitting conference which delivers safety messages to 6th formers – there are two sessions daily for 3-days and this year saw just under 5,000 students attend in Oxford. Film and presentations are made by firefighters, ambulance staff, police and an A&E Consultant surgeon. The safety message is powerful and a young person spoke to the audience on her life changing injuries which had affected her speech and physical mobility after a road accident.

My next surgery is this Saturday, 1st December and my next surgery will be on Saturday, 2nd February. There will be no surgery in January. If you wish to contact me you can email me on Judith.heathcoat@oxfordshire.gov.uk, or phone me on 01367 241468.

Can I wish you all, a little early perhaps, a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Judith Heathcoat County Councillor

 Faringdon Division Deputy Leader, Oxfordshire County Council