

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2021

Agenda item 7: County Council report

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN
COUNCIL - Cllr Neil Fawcett**

County Council budget

The Conservative administration proposed a budget that did not take the full 5% rise they were allowed (2% general, 3% specifically for Adult Social Care). This is out of step with neighbouring County Councils and Unitary authorities, most of whom believe that Adult Social Care desperately needs extra funds. This means £8m less for social care in Oxfordshire next year than was possible.

Relatively small amounts of extra funding were put into some services, but nowhere near enough to undo the damage to local services such as Children's Centres, Youth Service, rural bus services etc. that has been done during the last 16 years.

All three Abingdon County Councillors voted against the administration budget.

Lodge Hill

After years of pushing, it does now look like plans for the Lodge Hill interchange are moving forward.

Briefings for local councillors have started and there will be a public consultation happening soon, during March, all online of course.

All three Abingdon County Councillors raised questions about the initial design due to concerns about cycle and pedestrian safety.

We would encourage all local councillors and the public to respond to the consultation. If the current plan is delivered, the expectation now is that the junction will be finished by the Summer of 2023. (But that is a full year later than when I last reported on this to the Town Council.)

Wootton Road roundabout

Work is underway on the Wootton Road roundabout, being done by the housing developers as part of the package they have to deliver.

The work took your County Councillors by surprise as it had not been included in our regular briefings by county officers.

Once again, the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are not being provided for properly.

Reporting potholes, faulty street lights etc.

The most effective way to report potholes, faulty street lights, drainage problems and other similar issues is through the 'Fix My Street' website. Some improvements have been made to the system recently and I have certainly had more useful responses on issues I have reported.

The website is here: <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Councillor Priority Fund

So far this year, Priority Fund allocations have been made to the following groups and more are in consideration:

Abingdon Bridge, Abingdon Foodbank, Be Free Young Carers, Citizen's Advice, Earth Trust, FarmAbility, Maggie's Oxford, SOFEA (Abingdon Community Fridge), bell bollards in Abingdon, Covid emergency support, presents for care leavers, Abingdon Carousel Family Centre, IT equipment (Covid), Good Neighbours scheme.

Information about how to apply is here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund>

Local Transport & Connectivity Plan

Residents and organisations across Oxfordshire are being offered the chance to help shape the transformation of transport and digital connectivity across the county in a new consultation from 15 February to 28 March on a draft blueprint for the future.

This consultation will offer residents a chance to give feedback on the content of the plan.

The areas of focus for the new plan are:

- Commitments to de-carbonise the transport system by 2050
- Reducing the need to travel
- Discouraging unnecessary individual private vehicle use by promoting use of public transport and active travel such as walking and cycling
- A push towards quality digital gigabit and/or full fibre connectivity for all
- Enabling the economy to develop, supporting the Oxfordshire local industrial strategy agreed in July 2019
- Public transport operations and network changes amid the impacts of COVID-19.

URL : <http://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation-ltcp/>

Neil Fawcett
County Councillor for Abingdon South