

Abingdon-On-Thames Town Council

Wednesday 26 January 2022

Report To Abingdon Town Council

Cllr Neil Fawcett, Abingdon South Division, Oxfordshire County Council

Current consultations

The new County administration has put more resources into promoting consultations and is taking more notice of responses to them. These significant consultations are running currently:

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Residents are being invited to contribute to two consultations on plans to develop a more inclusive approach to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Oxfordshire.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-2022>

Libraries and heritage strategy

People can have their say on the future shape of library and heritage services as Oxfordshire County Council consults on a new strategy for the future.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/library-heritage-strategy-2022-2027>

Local Transport Plan

The County Council is currently working to produce a new Local Transport Plan. The local transport plan is the long-term county-wide transport strategy. They are calling theirs the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), to better reflect their strategy both for digital infrastructure and for connecting the whole county.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltcp>

Camera enforcement of traffic restrictions

Cameras could be fitted around locations in Oxfordshire to enforce traffic restrictions, making the streets and roads safer and less congested for all users.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/tma-2022>

I have responded to this one and requested a camera at the iron bridge to enforce the regularly flouted one way restriction.

Budget

The County Council faces a double squeeze due to Government under-funding of key services on the one hand and the financial mess left by the previous administration on the other.

In particular, Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Highways Maintenance are woefully underfunded across the country.

The county administration is putting additional resources into both Adult Social Care and Special Educational Needs. We are funding a year off from rent payments by community groups that lease county properties (like Abingdon Carousel). We are investing in our capacity to deliver more active travel, to reduce CO2 emissions and the delivery of rail investment across the county.

The proposed rise in the County's share of Council Tax is 2% on the basic Council Tax plus a 3% rise to fund Adult Social Care. This is in line with what the Government has told councils with responsibility for social care it expects them to do.

Lodge Hill

The plans for Lodge Hill move slowly forwards. Councillors have been briefed on the latest version of the design which have picked up on many of the responses to the consultation, particularly with regard to concerns about the provision for active travel.

The planning application and detailed design work is now being prepared. The planning application is expected to be submitted in 'Spring 2022' with permission by 'Autumn/Winter 2022' and work then proceeding.

20mph speed limits

There has been a very positive response to the County Council's new policy on 20mph speed limits with expressions of interest coming in from across the county.

A number of test areas are now up and running, with central Wallingford being the latest area to move to 20 mph. The test areas are being used to measure the impact of reduced speed limits and to identify additional measures that town and parish councils will be able to utilise to back up the lower speed limits.

Those towns and parishes requesting reduced limits will be dealt with over a three year period, so it is in Abingdon's interest to get our application in as quickly as possible if we want to be in the first tranche.

County/Cherwell Partnership

The County Council has been working in partnership with Cherwell DC for the past four years with the aim of delivering services more efficiently through shared staffing.

The Council leaderships announced last week that this partnership will be coming to an end.

Neil Fawcett, County Councillor for Abingdon South.