

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2023

ITEM 7 - REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

CLLR NATHAN LEY, ABINGDON NORTH DIVISION, OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

General

Successful bid for children's homes: OCC has successfully bid for a £5.2m grant to part fund four new residential children's homes. The homes would provide accommodation and support for children requiring solo provision or who can only share with one other child, children with autism, and children who have had adverse childhood experiences. These new homes would add to OCC's portfolio of three homes, along with the new 4-bedroom home being constructed in Aston. The matched funding by OCC is still to be finalised.

Lighting: Three in four streetlamps now LED: Over 75% of the 60,000+ street lighting assets in OCC control are now run with energy saving LED lights. Streetlighting is the largest source of carbon emissions in OCC's operations and is a growing cost due to rising energy prices. Since 2019/20 OCC has reduced carbon emissions by 21%, in large part thanks to the LED scheme. The milestone represents a significant improvement in the pace of rollout and will save the council [£77m over 20 years](#).

Bus news: Reduced bus fares: For 3 months (Jan-Mar), bus passengers can enjoy a [£2 cap on bus fares](#). Paid for by a government scheme, fares with participating bus firms will cost a maximum of £2 per adult single fare (includes Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel). Concessions are unaffected and school services are excluded.

Cabinet to pursue detailed discussions for possible new Oxford United stadium: By the time you read this there may already be a decision. On 24 January Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet is set to make a decision about whether to enter formal negotiations regarding leasing council-owned land to Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) for the development of a [new football stadium](#).

Health consultation: A draft strategy developed by local healthcare leaders from across the health and care system in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire (BOB) area is [being consulted on](#) (closes 29th Jan).

Highways works: There is now an OCC website showing [upcoming highways repairs](#) over the next two financial years currently planned. Check current road works [here](#).

Abingdon-specific

Lodge Hill New south facing slip roads for A34 at Lodge Hill, North Abingdon: The [planning application has been submitted](#) for new slip roads at Lodge Hill. The application is now being reviewed and the period for public comments has finished. A decision on this application is due in the coming months.

Abingdon reservoir: OCC has called for revived plans to build a seven square kilometre reservoir between Abingdon, Steventon and East Hanney to be dropped. However, this is very much still on the cards, and a favourite project of the government. There is more information on this at the [current Thames Water consultation](#).

Abingdon Bridge: The bridge has reopened for 2-way traffic, however, the fully planned repairs have not been able to be implemented, due to the discovery of a Thames Water main being cut into to the top of the arch barrel, and there being a risk of further utilities being cut into the arch barrel, which could conflict with the proposed strengthening measures.

It has also been found that there is a potential for bats to be disturbed, a protected species, and it is an offence to disturb a potential bat roost. It was intended to confirm no bats were present prior to carrying out these additional excavations, however the void was found to be more extensive than envisaged and could not be practically fully investigated. Officers claim that *“This can now only be practically established by carrying out emergence surveys for bats when they are expected to be active. This will not now be until next Spring. A licence will then need to be obtained which may take a few months. It is therefore now proposed to finish the strengthening work together with some further maintenance work to the bridge next Summer/Autumn”*.

In brief:

New Chief Executive: Dr Martin Reeves has been appointed OCC’s [new chief executive](#)

Traffic filter fake news rebutted: Watch rebuttals [here](#)

Award winning council: OCC wins three [environmental awards](#)

Guide to adulthood for SEND children: Guide on refreshed [website](#)