

## **PARISH REPORT FEBRUARY 2020**

### **BUDGET**

I am pleased that on 11<sup>th</sup> February I will be proposing an “investment budget” to reduce neglect, ill-health and social isolation, following resident and business consultation. The proposals include community support for vulnerable people so they can live independently for longer, and more help for struggling families to reduce the chances of children having to go into care.

Funding for children and adult social services will increase by £30 million next year, including an extra £8.1 million from the government. This money is needed to support an increase in adult social care needs for both older and disabled people, as well as the increasing number of child protection cases, which has grown in line with national trends.

The budget proposals also include investment in infrastructure across the county, such as an extra £50 million for new and existing schools over ten years. Most of the funding comes from housing developers to meet the need for more pupil places in Oxfordshire.

The county council proposes to spend £30 million in 2020/21 from its capital budget on repairs to roads, bridges, drainage and footways across Oxfordshire’s towns and villages, with major schemes scheduled in Banbury, Abingdon and Witney.

Responding to climate change features prominently across budget proposals, including support for sustainable travel such as improving park and ride services on the A40, and the replacement of over 50,000 streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs. However all budget proposals have to consider the climate change agenda and how the county council will meet its carbon neutral target by 2030.

### **NORTH COTSWOLD LINE TASKFORCE**

For several years I have been working with other councils, Network Rail, First Great Western and Local Enterprise Partnerships as part of the North Cotswold Line Taskforce to improve services on the route. There are proposals to have 4 trains an hour from Hanborough to Oxford and London. Below is the video link to the record of the Westminster Hall 'North Cotswold Line Transformation' debate obtained by Harriett Baldwin MP for West Worcestershire.

The Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris committed to giving us an answer to our request for 50% funding of the DEVELOP stage work by the end of February 2020 i.e. before the budget.

<https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/be737d5d-4a10-49ce-acb7-bab8b8b8f5b8?in=15:28:53&out=16:26:41>

Our MP, Robert Courts was in attendance but unable to speak due to his government role. DfT officials who we are already working with were similarly in attendance.

### **LIBRARY**

There is no news yet on Woodstock library that is currently temporarily situated in the museum. We are awaiting the outcome of the work with Community First and Blenheim to see if there can be an innovative solution to providing a new library facility in the town. The new library at Barton is sign of Oxfordshire County Council’s commitment to its library service, with 44 libraries now serving communities across the county and a home library service supporting those unable to get out to their local branch. Botley Library will also move to a new home in the West Way development this month.

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