

# **REPORT TO ROTHERFIELD GREYS PARISH COUNCIL**

## **JANUARY 2018 FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW**

### **GENERAL OCC REPORT**

#### **COUNCIL PROPOSES FUTURE BUDGET FROM A RESILIENT POSITION**

OCC is planning to set a new budget having made difficult choices in previous years to manage a combination of squeezed budgets and the fact that more people need council services. Since 2010 the council has managed reductions in finances available at the same time as rises in demand for services – especially in children’s social care and adult social care. At the same time the council has in recent years been involving communities ever more in services for their locality – ranging from support for older people and those with learning disabilities to library volunteers. The net result is that the council’s finances are in a resilient position looking ahead to the 2018/19 financial year and planning for years up to 2022. The council has used its agreed vision for the future – supporting thriving people, a thriving economy and thriving communities – as the basis on which proposals have been made for the 2018/19 financial year and the plan for the three financial years which follow. Although proposed budget changes are not as extensive as in many previous years since 2010, like any organisation the council still has rising financial pressures that need to be matched by new savings so that a balanced budget can be proposed. At the time of writing, plans are based on a Council Tax rise of 4.99% (1.99% referendum limit plus 3% social care precept). However, in December, Central Government announced councils could add an additional 1%, should they so choose. This is currently under consideration. The Budget has to be approved by Cabinet, then Full Council on February 13th. The Budget consultation can be found here:

[https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Budget\\_1819/consultationHome](https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Budget_1819/consultationHome)

#### **CRIMINALS TARGET PUBS AND CLUBS TO PEDDLE ILLEGAL TOBACCO**

Trading Standards are warning licensees and pub-goers to be on-the-look-out for criminals selling smuggled and counterfeit cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco. The call for vigilance follows recent research revealing that nearly half (43%) of illegal tobacco customers use pubs and clubs as their main source of supply. Cheap illegal tobacco is attractive to some smokers because it is often sold at half the price of the legal equivalent but its availability helps children to start smoking, brings communities into contact with organised criminals and undermines legitimate local businesses. In October HMRC released figures showing illegal tobacco made up 15% of all cigarettes and 28% of hand-rolling tobacco smoked in the UK. Taxpayers lost around £2.5 billion from the illicit trade in 2016-17. This money, for example, could be used to fund over 50,000 new NHS nurses for a year. Anyone with information relating to illegal tobacco being bought or sold, can report this to Trading Standards by anonymously via the Illegal Tobacco Hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0300 999 6 999 or online at <http://www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk/>

#### **1 MILLION TONNES OF RUBBISH TRANSFORMED INTO ENERGY AT ARDLEY PLANT**

OCC and its partner Viridor have marked the one millionth tonne of residual waste received at Ardley during December. The Ardley plant converts waste into electricity, rather than burying it in landfill. It produces enough energy to power 38,000 homes and can export up to 27MW per hour of electricity to the grid.

#### **SNOW GUIDE**

December saw substantial snowfall across the county. OCC has produced a useful guide for snow clearance and a copy is attached to this report.

## **SPECIFIC REPORT FOR ROTHERFIELD GREYS**

### **THIRD READING BRIDGE**

I have arranged for an OCC officer to attend the meeting on 18th January. The current official stance is as follows:

*It was agreed that further work is needed to understand in more detail the traffic impacts (both positive and negative), particularly on South Oxfordshire. The next stage in the business case process would include further refinement of the scheme options, an update of the Transport Economic Case; completion of the Management, Financial and Commercial Cases; Preliminary design and scheme costing; Ground investigation work and refinement of the environmental assessment.*

I have sought clarification from officers and they have confirmed the SOBC has been signed off as it is, with acknowledgement that there are still questions remaining. While these could be taken forward individually, they would like to look at them as the first stages of Outline Business Case, if funding is found – no funding has yet been identified for any level of extra work.

Another issue is that the Bridge is included in the Draft Reading Local Plan as a major transport project. The Plan understates the estimated cost and makes no provision for any mitigation methods in South Oxfordshire whatsoever, let alone a relief road.

### **HIGHLANDS FARM: OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR 5 DETACHED DWELLINGS**

Highways has recommended a Holding Objection until further information is supplied to address the following:

- The 'red-line' area does not abut the Highway and access to the proposal appears to be across third party land in which the applicant does not appear to have control over
- No visibility splay has been demonstrated for consideration, it appears given the neighbouring structures/walling this would impact upon any visibility splay from this proposed access
- The parking spaces do not meet current dimensional standards; for a standard car parking space, one which is not obstructed on either side this minimum internal dimension is required to be 2.5m wide by 5.0m in length. For a parking space which is obstructed on one side this minimum internal dimension is required to be 2.7m wide by 5.0m in length.
- No turning opportunity for emergency and or servicing vehicles has been demonstrated for consideration so as to allow for vehicles to egress the site in a forward gear
- No refuse storage or collection details have been demonstrated for consideration

### **ROCKY LANE WHITE LINING & VILLAGE GATES**

Subsequent to the last PC meeting, I chased up these matters and was advised orders have been issued (13/10/17) for the installation of the gates and associated signage.

With regard to the replacement of the road markings at the Rocky Lane junction, these works cannot be carried out until the detritus is removed from the carriageway surface. OCC has ordered these works but has yet to receive a date when the works will take place.