

# REPORT TO ROTHERFIELD GREYS PARISH COUNCIL NOV 2022

## FROM CLLR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

### GENERAL OCC REPORT

#### **LIBDEM/GREEN/LABOUR WAR ON MOTORISTS CONTINUES IN OXFORD**

A wide range of initiatives are either in place or being consulted upon. These include:

- ZEZ (Zero Emissions Zone): Non-electric cars are charged or fined if they enter the area
- LTNs (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods): Through traffic is blocked from certain areas
- Traffic Filters: The city is to be split into four sectors and cars without permits will be unable to travel directly from one sector to another
- Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs): Cars without permits are fined if they park in certain areas
- WPL (Workplace Parking Levy): Businesses are to be taxed if they provide parking spaces for employees

While understanding that traffic is a huge issue in Oxford, the Conservative Opposition wonders whether this is overkill and is concerned about the amount of Council time and Council Tax money being devoted to Oxford in comparison to towns and villages.

#### **OXFORD ZERO EMISSIONS ZONE (ZEZ) GENERATES £120,000 IN FEES & FINES**

The Cabinet Member in charge of Oxfordshire's highways insists the ZEZ scheme is not being used as a cash cow. Rolled out as a pilot on a handful of city centre roads in February, the ZEZ scheme sees automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras police charges between £2 and £10 for any vehicles that produce emissions. The prices will double from August 2025. The charges apply between 7am and 7pm every day on Bonn Square, Queen Street, Cornmarket Street, part of Market Street, Ship Street, St Michael's Street, New Inn Hall Street and Shoe Lane. It is set to be extended to cover much of the city centre next year, subject to public feedback.

#### **HIGHWAYS OFFICERS DEVOTE LOTS OF TIME & EFFORT RESTORING LTN BARRIERS**

The Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in Oxford remain unpopular with many residents and the barriers are frequently vandalised at great cost to the council. Cabinet Member Andrew Gant said: *"We will continue to make safe and reinstate all damaged bollards that have been forcibly knocked down or uprooted. Vandalism of this kind is a serious criminal offence and correcting it takes a lot of time and effort from our highway officers."*

#### **TRAFFIC FILTER PLAN TO SPLIT OXFORD INTO FOUR SECTORS**

The intention is to create four 'Sectors' within the city: North, South, West and East. When the traffic filters are operating, for cars without a permit, movement within each sector is unrestricted, but direct movement between sectors is not possible and requires use of the ring road. Affected motorists will face much longer journey times and distances. The intention is to force a change in behaviour.

#### **WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY**

The plan is to tax businesses on every parking space they provide to employees. The decision whether or not to pass this charge on to the employee rests with the company.

## **CONSERVATIVES ATTEMPT TO SAFEGUARD OF COUNCILLORS' PRIORITY FUND**

Conservatives successfully moved a motion at October Full Council to request that as part of the Budget process, the administration gives full consideration to extending the Councillors' Priority Fund, which is due to expire at the end of the year.

## **LIBDEMS PASS MOTION TO CUT VAT**

The LibDems put forward a motion to Full Council in October stating Government should immediately introduce various subsidies and cut VAT to 17.5%. The motion was passed despite Conservatives pointing out that whatever the merits or not of the proposal, the administration was once again wasting council resources trying to get involved in central government issues way beyond the council's remit. Councillors are not junior MPs and they should focus on local matters. It is believed the motion was centrally generated by LibDem HQ as almost identically worded motions have been debated at other LibDem councils.

## **LIBDEM/GREEN/LABOUR ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES VEGANISM CAMPAIGN**

Conservatives moved a motion at October Full Council to put a brake on the administration's veganism campaign but were unsuccessful.

## **HOMELESSNESS IN OXFORDSHIRE**

Housing associations, charities and local authorities in Oxfordshire have come together to embark on a programme to help tackle homelessness in the county. OCC has helped to form the Oxfordshire Homeless Alliance, commissioning partners to improve homeless services by taking a collaborative approach to support those experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

## **COUNCIL BUDGET**

This year, the government is not expected to hold a spending review, so government funding will not keep pace with inflation, leading to a predicted funding shortfall of over £30 million next year. OCC is also estimating around £20m of other demand-led pressures, which include: the growing nationwide costs of supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities; the rising cost of social care and care placements for both children and adults; and a national shortage of social care workers leading to a reliance on agency staff.

## **OCC DECLINES THE GOVERNMENT'S INVESTMENT ZONES INVITE**

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of OCC, has written a formal letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up to explain why OCC has decided not to bid to be involved in Whitehall's investment zones initiative. Given that this decision has been made, the Opposition is questioning why time and money is to be wasted at Full Council in November debating a motion praising the decision.

## **UPDATED PARKING STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS APPROVED**

On Tuesday 18 October, OCC's cabinet approved an updated guide for parking standards for new developments. It means developers will need to work collaboratively with the council to help achieve the targets set in the [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (LTCP), which was adopted earlier this year. The LTCP aims create a net zero transport system in Oxfordshire by 2040, improving health and wellbeing, tackling the climate emergency, reducing private vehicle use, and prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport. While supporting many of these objectives, Conservatives are questioning how the restrictions will apply in rural areas where residents are still very much dependent on the private car.

## **SPECIFIC REPORT FOR ROTHERFIELD GREYS**

### **SPEED BUMPS AHEAD OF ENTRANCE TO VILLAGE GREEN AND SATWELL CLOSE**

As reported previously, I have been copied on an email requesting the above. I await guidance from the PC as to whether it wants this matter progressed. A preliminary speed survey would probably be required and the PC would be liable to cover the cost of that and possibly all subsequent costs.

### **PAVEMENT THROUGH VILLAGE**

As a reminder, OCC has previously indicated it could not justify funding such a footpath, so the parish would need to draw on its own resources, perhaps CIL monies.

At the May PC meeting, I advised that initial thoughts from officers were as follows:

- Cost likely to be in the region of £50k (based on 1.5m width, assuming £120 p/m<sup>2</sup>).
- Some isolated damage / loss to private hedges fronting the highway is likely, either due to current encroachment or from the necessary excavations.
- It would be necessary to cross the road at least once, for some twice, in order to use the f/way to access the main amenities (church and pub) when coming from the east, which might be ignored given the short distance and likely habitual current behaviour of walking in the road.
- The footway could be criticised for 'urbanisation' of the current semi-rural setting.
- A section outside the church looks to have a grass-crete / mesh type earth stabilisation for parking cars – need to understand how this area is used for routing of f/way etc.

An in-depth assessment with costs was to follow but remains outstanding six months on.

I have complained to the Director of Highways and Operations about the lack of progress on this matter which has been dragging on for a year. I have received apologies and an undertaking that the matter will now receive proper attention.