

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE STEPS DOWN

Joanna Simons will be stepping down as Chief Executive in September in order that OCC can carry out a review of senior management arrangements. The aim is to reduce costs in the light of further funding cuts announced by the government. Earlier this year the council had a series of robust debates about whether to remove the post but concluded that a permanent change required further consideration. Following further cross party discussion, it has been decided to put an interim arrangement in place pending a senior management review. The council has reached an amicable agreement with Joanna to step down so this can take place.

## BUDGET 2014/15 REVIEW

The final outturn for the 2014/15 year was an underspend of £0.196m on a budget of £424,185m, which is an impressive achievement despite all the pressures that exist. The good news is that there has still been investment in Highways with a capital expenditure for 2014/15 year of £43.1m. This was £17.8m higher than in 2013/14. Major projects completed include Kennington Interchange, Witney Ducklington/Station Lane Junction, Oxford London Road, A4130 Bix dual carriageway and A420 Shrivenham Bypass. There was £14.8m spent on highways structural maintenance programmes.

## COUNTY COUNCIL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUDGETS – UPDATE

Since 2010 the council has saved £204 million with a further £88 million of savings to be made by 2018. A report to the Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> May stated that there could be another £50M - £60M of saving to be found. There will be more clarity on this figure after the budget on 8<sup>th</sup> July. This will be a challenge to the County Council with the increasing pressure on both adult and children's social care – currently around 50% of the budget is spent on just 2% of the population.

## EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES

The Early Intervention Service and Children's Centres are currently supported by a budget of approximately £16M. As part of the service and resource planning process for the period 2014/15-2017/18, possible savings of £6M against this figure were identified by a cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group. These savings could be achieved if the Early Intervention Service was integrated with Children's Social Care. This proposal was debated at the Cabinet meeting in June and it was agreed that full proposals would come back to Cabinet in September after a summer of engagement with partners. A full consultation process will then take place.

## SUPPORTED TRANSPORT SERVICES

OCC needs to save more than £6M on supported transport services, and a consultation is currently taking place about how this can best be achieved. (The consultation closes on 14<sup>th</sup> September.) OCC has asked the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC), a not for profit, community development organisation, to act as the independent facilitator during the consultation. Some money can be saved by running existing services more efficiently, but savings will also have to come by reducing the current £4M a year the council pays in bus subsidies and to run the Dial-a-Ride service. To comment on the proposals or to attend one of the five public consultation events, contact the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council on 01865 883488 or email [orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk](mailto:orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk).

## LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

At the July Cabinet meeting the Local Transport Plan for 2015-2031, *Connecting Oxfordshire*, will be considered following public consultation. The business case for delivering the A40 bus lane scheme and developing the long-term A40 strategy will also be considered.

## RECRUITMENT OF 'SHARED LIVES' CARERS

*Shared Lives*, a scheme established over thirty years ago, enables people over the age of 16 who needs support or accommodation, to become a regular visitor to or move in with a Shared Lives carer. Together, they share family and community life. Typically, people supported by Shared Lives have a learning or physical disability. By joining the scheme, they often become a permanent part of a supportive family and by doing so increase their independence. Shared Lives is also used to give breaks to unpaid family carers or as a stepping-stone for someone to get their own place. The Oxfordshire Shared Lives Scheme currently supports around 80 people in long term arrangements and a further 40-50 people who use the service for short breaks. The scheme is constantly seeking to recruit new Shared Lives Carers. Please spread the word about Shared Lives and to encourage more people to sign up as carers. To find out more visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sharedlives](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sharedlives)

## NEW DIRECTORY OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND CARERS

The County Council funded Community Information Network, has developed a directory of services for adults and carers. The aim of the Community Information Network is to provide information and advice to adults to help them maintain their independence and keep well. The directory contains a wealth of information about activities and support. Listings range from IT clubs, singing clubs, mobile libraries, health and wellbeing centres, to exercise classes and Women's Institutes. The directory can be accessed at [www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire)  
If you have any feedback about the directory or would like to add any entries, please write to the Community Information Network team at: [network@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:network@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk)

## Cllr Patrick Greene – Didcot East & Hagbourne Division – Oxfordshire County Council