**A40 HID BID**

Oxfordshire County Council has been successful with its Housing Infrastructure Fund bid of £102.00 million which is addition to the current £38 million A40 bus lane scheme.

The announcement means that the County Council can deliver:

Extension of the A40 dual carriageway from Witney to the proposed Eynsham park and ride, including improving cycling facilities along the route.

Extension of A40 westbound bus lane from west of Duke’s Cut Canal and railway bridges close to Oxford near to the proposed Eynsham park and ride.

A40 capacity and connectivity improvements to widen access at Duke’s Cut Canal and railway bridges, extending the eastbound and westbound bus priority lane, prioritising bus rapid transit at this pinch point.

Delivering these schemes will help the traffic flow along the A40 which should lead to a reduction in traffic cutting through the A4095, this includes HGVs.

**NORTH COTSWOLD LINE TASKFORCE**

It’s not just about road improvements to the A40 corridor as Oxfordshire County Council along with Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire County Councils are working with Network Rail and First Great Western on developing the North Cotswold line. This would include partial doubling of the line, station improvements along with signal improvements, the cost would be in the region up to £200 million pounds. We need to produce a strategic business case that then can be agreed to release the funds from the department of Transport. The outcome from this would be 4 trains an hour from Hanborough which would transform connectivity to Oxford and London.

**LOCAL CYCLING ROUTES**

I would like to thank Colin Carritt for organising a meeting to discuss local cycling routes which would improve routes in and around Woodstock. we all have to work together to get the maximum benefit. Two key routes were discussed one from Old Woodstock into the centre of town and to the school. The other route was to Hanborough station making it as easy as possible for people to cycle to the station.

**YOUTH FUND**

Voluntary and community organisations are being invited to bid for a share of Oxfordshire County Council’s new £1m Youth Opportunity Fund. The fund is aimed at groups that can provide activities and opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-18, and 11-25 with special educational needs.

Feedback from Oxfordshire residents points to strong support for improving community-run youth services. This new fund is available to help existing projects expand and new ones get started. Grants of up to £70,000 are available.

By offering start-up funding in previous years, the council has already helped many community-run groups provide support for younger children and families. Now the aim is to do the same for youth services.

Community-run youth schemes complement the work of the county council’s children’s services, which target resources at young people and families with additional needs and those at risk of abuse and neglect. The council also has a desire for more youth clubs to be established.

The county council believes communities are well placed to provide universal services and this is already an established model in Oxfordshire.

A fund was launched in 2016 to provide grants for local groups to start services for children such as ‘stay and play’, with the creation or continuation of around 40 projects. A similar fund was created for voluntary and community groups to start up day services for older and disabled people in Oxfordshire.

**BUDGET**

The budget process starts as soon as the budget is set each February. However, intense work is carried out through the autumn leading up to Christmas. The announcement of additional Government funding was welcome news but it was disappointing that it was only for one year as Local Government were expecting a longer-term settlement. There is pressure on both Adult and Children’s Social Care due to increased demand so there will be some difficult decisions to take during the budget setting process. With the announcement of a General Election it will mean some late announcements on the details of local government funding in December.

**GROWTH DEAL FUNDING**

I have been working hard over recent months to try and find a solution to the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid for Didcot, I know that the senior members of SODC want to retain the funding however there is a requirement for a local plan to be in place. The decision by the Secretary of State to put a holding notice on SODC’s local plan does mean there is more time to find a solution.

The announcement of the A40 HIF bid is good news as it does separate the 2 bids, however. We know that WODC do have a Local Plan in place which will allow the bid to proceed. The impact of a failed bid due to having no Local Plan in place is not confined to SODC; if there is no HIF then the Vale Local Plan could also fail. I urge SODC members to follow the route of Vale members and continue with the submitted Local Plan and have an early review, this would retain the £218 million HIF bid.

I am continuing to work with members and officers at SODC to find a solution.

**Cllr Ian Hudspeth**

07956270 318

**Ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk**