

REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS

FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

JULY 2014

OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

I reported last month that Children's Services have been subject to a detailed Ofsted Inspection concerning their **Child Protection** and **Looked After Children's (LAC) Services**. In addition, the **Local Safeguarding Board (LSB)** has been subject to a simultaneous but separate inspection. The outcome of the 4-week inspection is that Children's Services have been judged as **Good in all six categories**.

These include:

- Children who need help and protection
- LAC
- Adoption
- Experiences and progress of Care Leavers
- Leadership Management and Governance
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Needless to say we are delighted with this outcome which is the result of a lot of hard work from staff, our partners and local councillors.

OXFORDSHIRE'S KINGFISHER TEAM IN ACTION

There was further good news for Children's Services when they were awarded a **Management Journal (MJ) Achievement Award** alongside their Health & Police partners, for their joint working in the Kingfisher Unit. This is a specialist Unit working with vulnerable children. Unfortunately there was also the news that 6 men were arrested in Banbury as part of an investigation that the Kingfisher team carried out into child sexual exploitation. We will continue to work hard to catch the criminals and stop them from harming children.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/jun/oxfordshire%E2%80%99s-kingfisher-team-wins-prestigious-national-award>

CONNECTING OXFORDSHIRE

The Leader of the Council, Ian Hudspeth, has been presenting strategic transport schemes across the County. Each meeting has focussed on the respective locality and considers the work of the County Council and our partners such Network Rail between now and 2020.

The good attendance has generated the debates we want to have ahead of any decisions, and there are a further four meetings in July. Each meeting takes place at 7.00pm:

Mon 7 July	Witney	Henry Box School
Tue 15 July	Didcot	Cornerstone
Wed 16 July	Henley	Town Hall
Wed 23 July	Oxford	County Hall

We are beginning to construct Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and debate from these meetings will feed into that plan. It is vital that we have a transport system which will enable residents to move around the county. **Consultation on the Goals and Objectives** of the new plan runs until 1st August. A draft plan will be worked on during the autumn and presented for **full consultation in the spring of 2015**.

For more information on Connecting Oxfordshire, please see:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/apr/county-council-leader-outlines-his-vision-transport-connecting-oxfordshire>

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

Children across Oxfordshire can explore a Mythical Maze as part of this year's Summer Reading Challenge. **The Challenge encourages children to read at least six books over the summer holiday**, collecting amazing rewards on the way. When they've finished the children will get a wristband, a medal and a certificate.

The Challenge runs from July 12th to September 13th and it can be done in only three visits to the library. All the children have to do is pick up a Mythical Maze poster and start reading, all for free!

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/jun/are-you-ready-%E2%80%98-maze-ing%E2%80%99-summer-your-library>

FUTURE OF LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES IN OXFORDSHIRE

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group are jointly **reviewing the commissioning and provision of all services for people with learning disabilities**. We welcome the HealthWatch and Oxfordshire Family Support Network report, published on 26 June, and will involve them and examine their findings in our review.

Our primary objective is to ensure the safety of those who are being cared for and we continue to work closely with Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust which provides many of these services in Oxfordshire. This review is part of our planned reassessment of services and **our aim of supporting more people with learning disabilities to live in the community with appropriate support** with fewer living in hospital-type settings. This also follows national guidance.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/jun/statement-future-learning-disability-services-oxfordshire>

CONSULTATION ON HOUSING-RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES

A 12-week consultation has launched on how to **save £1.5m over two years from services for homeless people and substance misusers** with a proposal that would see three hostels in Oxford remain open. The proposal, approved for consultation by the multi-agency Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board, seeks to challenge and engage with stakeholders, including providers and service users, on how relevant services - known collectively as housing related support - could be delivered in the future.

Oxfordshire County Council had subsidised a reduction in central government funding for housing related support for the past four years but decided in February that it could no longer do so.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/jun/consultation-how-save-%C2%A315m-housing-related-support-services-launched>

FIREFIGHTER GETS BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL FOR INNOVATIVE FLOOD WORK

Firefighter Gary Mattingley has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his national work around flood management and the innovative approach he hatched which was used by Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service to keep Oxford open to traffic during February's floods.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/jun/firefighter-gets-british-empire-medal-innovative-flood-work>

NEW CHILDREN'S HOMES TO PROTECT VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

Plans for two new children's homes to ensure the safety of vulnerable young people in care – or at risk of coming into the care system – are set to be unveiled.

The council is proposing to build an **Assessment Centre in Thame**, for up to six children on the 'edge' of the care system, and a **'move-on' home in Didcot** for up to four older teenagers preparing to leave care. The homes would enable more of the county's vulnerable young people to live closer to home and reduce the need to send children to costly out-of-county settings where the council also has less control over the quality of placements.

More information at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2014/jun/new-children%E2%80%99s-homes-protect-vulnerable-young-people>

Cllr Patrick Greene – Didcot East & Hagbourne Division - OCC