

Oxfordshire County Council News October/November 2025

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Temporary Congestion Charge

The temporary congestion charge in Oxford city began on 29th October.

Next Full Councils on 4th November and 9th December

For 4th November (next Full Council), our Green Party group is tabling a question concerning the proposed Abingdon Reservoir. The Abingdon Reservoir story has been familiar to all of us in Oxfordshire for the last 20 years.

Despite almost every public body in Oxfordshire objecting to the South East Strategic Reservoir Option, this still seems to be forging ahead with strong governmental backing and a desperate provider in Thames Water (even with the increase in forecast costs from £2.2bn to a staggering £7.5bn).

We've been left collectively clutching at straws as to how to stop this – with our last chance maybe the emergency discharge facility required, and what could happen if this is actually triggered.

Fingers crossed we get the support of the council (which I'm sure we will!). Our motion this time round will be seconded by the Lib Dems showing good cross-party working.

We are also putting forward a joint motion with the Lib Dems on a combined community cohesion action plan with appropriate resourcing and funding in light of the recent climate of uncertainty and fear as symbolised by the explosion of flag-flying on lampposts etc.

For my three Questions to Cabinet, I am asking the following (here in summary):

- 1.) What can be done to fulfil OxonCC's statutory duty to 'coordinate' roadworks in Garsington where they are enduring endless road closures and re-openings without any foresight or planning, dangerously cutting off residents from vital services for huge periods?
- 2.) Will the Cabinet ensure the earliest publication of plans for the proposed cycle route to Oxford from Berinsfield along the Roam Road now it seems feasible according to studies conducted?
- 3.) Will the Cabinet ensure that the 19km of new walking and cycleways which are set to accompany the HIF1 road scheme be fit for purpose, allow for expansion and be safe to use?

Tollgate Road/Abingdon Road crossing at Culham

After years of lobbying and waiting by various groups including Culham Parish Council, and CulBug (Culham Bike Users Group) among others, funding and permission has finally been found to construct a safe crossing out of Culham for pedestrians and cyclists onto the A415 and perhaps most notably for children to safely access the invaluable Europa School. Work should begin shortly for completion in 2026.

This represents one of 33 projects for which OxonCC's Cabinet has unlocked £23.5m of developer funding (s106) contributing with £4m of its own scarce capital budget.

A4074

The new road-markings reducing speed to 50mph along the Dorchester bypass are nearly complete and the ambiguous hatching in the centre which seemed to only encourage overtaking have been removed.

Road re-surfacing

The County Council's re-surfacing programme continues and the details are [here](#).

Improving our fire service:

OxonCC is asking for your views on proposed changes to how we respond to emergencies, ensuring that we have more fire engines consistently available and to overall enable us to get to incidents across Oxfordshire more quickly than we can now. To participate enter [here](#). Closes 20th January 2026.

Tree planting

1,100 trees are being planted throughout Oxfordshire in the next five weeks. Find out if one is coming to a street near you by logging on at: tinyurl.com/TreePlotterOCC (Username: Tree Planting, Password: oxontrees) You can also request trees if you think a piece of Highways land is suitable by emailing: tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

The County Council's response to the above instruction by national government is published [here](#). The three different proposals in play in Oxfordshire will be discussed by OxonCC's Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th November, by Cabinet on 13th November and the preferred option submitted to HM Government on 28th November.

Councillor Priority Fund

This grant fund is now open until the end of November 2026. I have £10k to award over two years. Individuals are not eligible, only groups with a committee and a constitution (or rules governing their operation). The application must demonstrate community benefit.

Applications can only be made online through: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund. Please talk to me/email in the first instance before applying.