

Survey Shows Residents Very Unhappy with Council Services

The results of the 'Residents Satisfaction Survey' have been published. It shows great levels of unhappiness in rural areas, while residents in the city of Oxford are far more content.

Key Points

- Overall satisfaction with council below Local Government Association average.
- Just 32% of residents believe the council provides value for money.
- Oxford residents far happier with council than those in rural areas
- Maintenance of roads is rated by 68% of residents as the councils most important service, yet it does not feature in the list of council priorities.
- The level of satisfaction with the local area as a place to live has declined from 84% in 2021 to 72% in 2024
- The administrations No.1 priority is Climate Change and in 2021 38% of residents agreed with this, but that has now fallen to just 18%
- The clear message is residents want day-to-day practical matters (particularly roads) prioritised over ideological objectives.

There is a perception in rural areas that the city of Oxford receives favourable treatment. Net satisfaction figures with respect to the way OCC runs things adds weight to this and satisfaction with Oxford at 36% and South Oxfordshire is just 14%

I have raised the matter of the current administration being too Oxford centric many times and the results of this survey confirms this.

My inbox is constantly full of issues around highway related matters and it is shocking that highways do not feature in the administrations top 9 priorities.

It is my personal view that the Lib Dem / Green administration needs to stop its pet vanity projects based around a War on Motorists. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN's), Zero Emission Zones, and their latest idea of Workplace Parking Charges are seriously damaging the local economy in and around Oxford city with businesses closing and people avoiding Oxford completely. The situation will only get far worse if our market towns have similar schemes introduced.

Councillor Priority Fund

If you are involved with or know of a local community group that needs funding for a project please get in touch with me. I have some grant funding money available through my Councillor Priority Fund. The application process is very straight forward. Details are available by contacting councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The last date for applications is 30th November so please to apply soon.

Benson Relief Road

It is good to see, at long last the Relief Road nearing completion and the disruption of the Oxford Road closure over. I have been contacted by some residents who would like to see the new road with a 20mph limit. The current proposal is 30mph. I'd be interested to hear the views of the parish council.

Impact of the Governments October 30th Budget on Councils

The whole range of implications of the Budget on OCC will not become clear until the Local Government Statement later this month and the Local Government Financial Settlement in December, but the council will face a substantial rise in overheads if the increased minimum wage and higher Employment National Insurance costs are not funded by Central Government.

Personally I feel there is a great deal of waste already under the current administration of Lib Dems and Greens at OCC and having our Labour central government put up taxes by £40 Billion will undoubtedly cause more misery for tax payers across the county.

Inheritance Tax on Farms

Although this is being enforced by central government we all live in a rural constituency with farms and farming the backbone of many of our smaller communities.

We need strong resilient farming communities if we care about our environment, food security and our economy. There needs to be defence of family farming across the country. Rural counties like Oxfordshire will feel the full negative impact of this ill conceived tax on our hard working farming community over the coming years. Personally I will be speaking up for farming at every opportunity and urge you all to do the same.

Please do get in touch if you have a county council matter you think I can help with.

Felix.

Cllr Felix Bloomfield
Benson & Cholsey Division
Oxfordshire County Council