

Councillor Andrew McHugh
Nomads
Sibford Road
Epswell
Oxfordshire
OX15 6LH

15 April 2019

REPORT FOR ADDERBURY PARISH MEETING APRIL 2019

Following my re-election in May 2018, I was appointed to the Cherwell District Council Executive as the Lead Member for Health and Well-Being. My portfolio of responsibilities extends well beyond just health and well-being and I will give a brief overview of my activities in the past year in each of these areas.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

I am the Chairman of the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership. This is a committee bringing together stakeholders in community safety within the Cherwell area. It is comprised of Cherwell District Council, Thames Valley Police, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, The Probation Service, head teachers from local schools, faith groups and others. This is a forum to receive feedback from Thames Valley Police on local crime trends and also feedback from other stakeholders regarding concerns about community safety in Cherwell. This committee reports to the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership and then to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel which is attended by both the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner and The Thames Valley Police Chief Constable.

The concerns I have raised at these panels include:

- Illicit Tobacco
- Modern Slavery
- Hidden Harm
- Information sharing to inform licensing decisions
- traffic calming
- Rural crime
- Antisocial Behaviour

YOUNG PEOPLE, OLDER PEOPLE

I have been working with “Age Friendly Banbury” an initiative that aims to “do what it says on the tin”. There was an unsuccessful application for Lottery funding but it is felt that making Banbury age-friendly is worth pursuing even without lottery funding.

I am the chairman of 'Brighter Futures', an initiative to address inequalities through targeted interventions into micro postcodes within Banbury. This is all about breaking the cycle of deprivation. Brighter Futures bring together a number of agencies and organisations from both the statutory and voluntary sector. We are seeing positive outcomes from this initiative. There are other initiatives aimed at breaking the cycle such as "Play Full" which seeks to address food poverty during school holidays in the absence of school meals. There is also FAST, which encourages physical activity in the young from deprived communities by providing discounted access to leisure activities.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

I have been assisting council officers in reviewing and updating emergency planning within Cherwell District Council to ensure that we have the resilience to continue to be able to deliver services in "emergencies". Some of these changes have been quite basic but highly effective such as ensuring there is always a duty director with a mobile phone with a signal.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I particularly proud that, even in times of financial difficulties, Cherwell District Council has continued to support community initiatives via its community development grant scheme. The aim of this grant scheme is to provide "pump priming funding" for beneficial community initiatives that might otherwise not get off the ground.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The vast majority of my time over the past year has been taken up with role as Lead Member for Health and Well-Being. I am the chairman of the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board, a subcommittee of the powerful and influential Oxfordshire Health and Well-Being Board. As Chairman of the Health Improvement Board, I am tasked with reducing levels of inactivity within Oxfordshire, reducing obesity, reducing incidents of domestic violence and promoting prevention strategies within health.

As Chairman of the Health Improvement Board, I sit as a member of the Oxfordshire Health and Well-Being Board. This is a committee that brings together the leaders of stakeholder organisations in health and well-being from across Oxfordshire. The committee is chaired by Councillor Ian Hudspith, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council. Members also include the chief executives of: Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxford University Hospital Trust, Oxford Health Foundation Trust (community health trust), Oxfordshire Health Watch and senior representatives from Adult Social Care, Public Health and Primary Health Care (GPs). This committee has, recently, been inspected by the Care Quality Commission, who remarked favourably on the progress health and social care partners have made towards joint working.

I continue to fight to re-establish obstetrics at the Horton Gen Hospital. Previously I sat on the Oxfordshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee where I was able to scrutinise the plans of Oxford University Hospital Trust and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. As an executive member of Cherwell District Council I am no longer eligible to sit on an overview and scrutiny committee. I do, however, attend the Horton Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee where I continue to speak for the reintroduction of obstetrics at The Horton.

I have attended a stakeholder-meetings organised by the Clinical Commissioning Group to decide the criteria for comparing the options for obstetrics at The Horton - or not at The Horton. I am concerned that the CCG have omitted to include how the various options will affect deprived communities within Banburyshire is one of the criteria. I believe this to be one of the most compelling reasons for re-establishing obstetrics at The Horton. I have been invited to take part in the scoring of the criteria to inform the decision of which option will be chosen for the Horton. Even though I disagree with the criteria the Clinical Commissioning Group is using, I have decided to participate. If I am part of the process, I can argue my case within the room. If I do not engage, I will have no influence in the room.

In my role as lead member for health and well-being, I have been involved in the "Bicester Healthy New Town". This is a project aimed at using 'nudge theory' to embed health and well-being within everyday life. It involves looking at how planning of the "built environment" can influence and increase the amount of exercise people take. The lessons of the programme are being evaluated and will be rolled out in Kidlington and then Banbury over the next 2 to 3 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION

I meet regularly with council officers involved in environmental health and protection. I raise concerns brought to me by other councillors about issues within their wards. For instance, at the moment I am dealing with a problem of noise pollution emanating from a paper factory in Bicester. I have also had concerns raised about the Banbury railway sidings and the Bloxham service station.

FOOD HYGIENE

We are very lucky in Cherwell that are food hygiene standards are above the national average. Over 70% of food businesses in Cherwell have a three star rating or higher. I meet regularly with council officers to discuss public concerns. For instance, there was significant social media traffic about a well-known and well loved Banbury food business receiving a zero star rating following an inspection. It is important to stress that the cleanest premises could receive a zero star rating if they do not have proper processes in place to avoid cross contamination. It is also not enough to be able to show that the business is clean today. There has to be documentation in place to show that it was clean in the period leading up to today and will be clean tomorrow.

Cherwell works with food businesses to help them achieve good ratings for food hygiene and, as in the case referred to in the earlier paragraph, has achieved good success in turning around businesses that were failing to meet hygiene standards. Where a business will not engage with us and will not accept advice and guidance, we will have no compunction in closing that business. Our overriding objective is to safeguard the public.

It is also important to realise that a five-star rating for a food business does not mean that the food that is served is healthy. It only means that the food that is served is hygienic. For this reason, Cherwell has launched a new scheme called "Eat Out, Each Well".

LICENSING

I am also the lead member for licensing. One of my great concerns is making sure that we use licensing in order to protect the public. I am using my membership of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel to push for Thames Valley wide Joint Operating Protocol between local authorities And Thames Valley Police to give consistency to the way that police intelligence can be shared with local authorities as an adjunct to the DBS system to inform licensing decisions for taxi drivers.

I am concerned about the sale of illicit tobacco across Oxfordshire. This is not somebody going to the continent and coming back with a holdall full of cigarettes. The sale of illicit tobacco across the country is a manifestation of serious and organised crime. There is a particular business model used to distribute and sell illicit tobacco. It involves high-tech concealment techniques within business premises that have to be seen to be believed. Many of the techniques would not be out of place in a James Bond movie. Currently, there is little that we can do to disrupt this business. Trading Standards uncover the sale. Cherwell remove the businesses' licence. The business changes the licensee, and we have to re-issue the licence even though we suspect that the licensee is purely a nominee. I have asked for a legal opinion on applying "closure orders" to businesses found to have been selling illicit tobacco. This is not without risk to Cherwell but I am clear that I cannot tolerate serious and organised crime acting with impunity in our area.

ARTS

I'm also the lead member for Arts. In this role I am a trustee of Banbury Museum, The Mill Arts Centre and an observer in the newly formed Tooley's Boatyard Trust. I'm also the lead member for public art. I realise this can be a divisive issue but I do see public art as a way of enriching our built environment.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

I'm also the lead member for liaison with the voluntary sector. I am a trustee of the Banbury Citizens Advice Bureau.

SAFEGUARDING

I am the lead member for safeguarding. This has a lot of crossover with my role as lead member for licensing. I meet regularly with the Local Police Area commander to discuss how safeguarding of vulnerable members of the population can be improved. We have a team of community wardens who engage with young people to try to steer them away from the lure of easy money. The community wardens also assist in trying to regain public green spaces from antisocial elements again with the aim of keeping our young people out of trouble.



Councillor Andrew McHugh
Adderbury, Bloxham & Bodicote up