

SODC A Conservative District Councillor's View
(Or What The Council Is Doing)

October 2016.

Planning Matters.

We continue to see a very heavy load of cases coming forward with many of these coming to Planning Committee which is presently sitting twice a month.

At the beginning of September, our Planning Committee refused planning permission for about 90 houses on the outskirts of Shiplake on normal planning grounds. This was because the area fell within the area covered by the Henley and Harpenden Neighbourhood Plan, which in law now reduces the weight given because of the issue of the Five Year Land Supply. This reinforces the importance of having a made Neighbourhood Plan in place, especially as more and more appeal and Court decisions are demonstrating the importance of NDPs and as the housing figures from NDPs will be used to inform our emerging Local Plan.

Sonning Common have now completed its referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan with 94% of the votes in favour of adoption. It will be before Full Council at SODC on the 13th October where it is expected to be formally 'made'.

Growth Board meeting update

At the Growth Board meeting on Monday 26 September, five of Oxfordshire's six councils (Cherwell, City, County Council, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire) agreed to the recommendations made by senior officers from all six councils on how Oxford's unmet housing need, assumed to be 15,000 homes, should be met across the county. However, South Oxfordshire District Council has not yet agreed its figure.

Cllr John Cotton said, "South Oxfordshire recognises the difficult situation the City Council is in. However, the pressure to find space for more homes is one that affects us all, and residents here rightly expect the City Council to leave no stone unturned in its efforts to meet its own need.

"It is unfortunate that the City declined our offer of a substantial number of houses in the interim period prior to their Local Plan having an opportunity to find answers to their problems. However, we will continue to work in friendly partnership with members and officers at the City and together help tackle the challenges we face in Oxfordshire."

Scrutiny

We recently looked at the emerging Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire with our colleagues from the Vale at Joint Scrutiny Committee. We share concerns over the way that the Plan as it stands is very Oxford centric and focuses on the 'science and technology spine' from Bicester through to Harwell. Both councils have concerns that this focus means that areas like ours, and the need for infrastructure, both physical and technological, and premises for small businesses to grow into have not been addressed. A document containing our concerns has been drawn up and we have recommended that Cabinet refer the Plan to full Council for debate.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee also looked at the first year's performance of the contractor who runs our leisure centres. Our nearest is at Thame. There were inevitably teething problems when GLL took over but these were rapidly resolved and overall we have recommended Cabinet accept the recommendation that performance is 'Good' and note that GLL have plans in place which will further raise the standards.

Public consultation on changes to local health services

Public opinion and feedback on proposed changes to health care provision in the district is being requested as part of a public consultation starting in January 2017.

Earlier this year, the local NHS ran a series of county wide events seeking the public's views on the options developed by Oxfordshire's healthcare leaders to make care clinically and financially sustainable for the future. Health services affected include maternity and children's services, mental health and primary care.

Proposed changes are likely to be significant and include how care is delivered as well as the number and location of sites from which it is provided.

No decisions have been made about any proposed changes and will not be taken until the public consultation has run its course so the consultation feedback will help shape the transformation of healthcare services in Oxfordshire for the future.

More information on the Oxfordshire Healthcare Transformation Programme can be found at www.oxonhealthcaretransformation.nhs.uk

Encourage residents to sign up for newsletter

We are now publishing South News as a separate newsletter which will include information of interest to residents in the district. Please can you encourage local residents to sign up for the newsletters which will be published every two months.

South News keeps residents in touch with news from the council, including the latest on planning and housing in South Oxfordshire, news on recycling collections and events at our leisure centres and Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot.

To receive South News visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/southnews

Waste Recycling

We've collected over 50 tonnes of kerbside recycling

Over a twelve month period from August 2015 to July 2016 we collected 25 tonnes of electrical items and 28 tonnes of textiles. That's enough to fill seven 26 tonne trucks!

South Oxfordshire top again

According to provisional rates published by Letsrecycle.com we look set to retain our place as the country's top recycling authority.

South is top of Let's Recycle league table, with residents recycling 66.5 per cent, with the Vale Of The White Horse second at 64.8 per cent.

Recent issues with contamination have resulted in a decrease of 0.8 per cent from last year for both districts. This is something we're actively tackling this Autumn with our ban on black sacks. However, with nine out of the top ten districts all experiencing a drop in recycling over the last year, we're certainly not the only ones having this issue.

DEFRA will announce the official result later in the year.

Changing sacks to boost recycling

Reminder: From 3 November, we'll only empty green wheelie bins if the recycling in them is loose or in clear sacks.

Despite a recent campaign to raise awareness about the problem of contamination, some people continue to contaminate recycling, particularly with food waste and dirty nappies. When this happens whole truckloads of recycling are rejected at the recycling centres.

So we're insisting on clear sacks or no sacks to help us identify contaminated bins.

Until 3 November we'll leave a bin hanger on any bins containing black or coloured sacks explaining the problem. We'll empty the bin on that occasion, but if it happens again after 3 November we won't empty the bin but will leave another note to explain why.

For more information please contact the waste team on 01235 422406.

BinFo is retiring

The waste collection application BinFo is retiring after years of great service. You can still get information about when your next collection is and which bin needs to go out by going to <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/news/2016/2016-10/enter-binzone> or by searching on the internet for SODC bin Zone. Rumour has it that a new app will be released and when it is I shall let you know!

Corporate plan 2016-20 has been published

The corporate plans setting out the councils' strategic objectives and priorities are now available online.

The SODC Corporate Plan can be found by copying and pasting this link:

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=60edef2eeb&e=eda6ce4f57>

Yellow letter

All homes across both districts should have received a yellow letter from us asking residents to confirm who currently lives at their address. We need this information to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so in future elections.

As soon as people get their yellow letter they should visit

www.householdresponse.com/southandvale

to confirm their details are correct or, if not, provide the correct information. If someone doesn't have access to the internet the yellow letter contains details on the alternative ways to respond.

If there's a public noticeboard in your area please help us spread the word by displaying this poster.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pyg5dx1iueykq81/Yellow%20letter%20-%20when%20it%20arrives.pdf?dl=0>

Blanket testing events

As mentioned last month if you know someone who uses an electric blanket please encourage them to get it tested before using it this winter. To help out, we're working with the other district councils and Oxfordshire Trading Standards to put on a series of 'Blanket Check' events this October and there are still three dates left:

Monday 17 - Wantage

Wednesday 19 - Henley

Thursday 20 - Oxford

Anyone wanting to book an appointment should call 01865 815 000 (option 4) or email communityengagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Devolution update

In a statement sent out this week, the city and district councils reiterated their position that having three unitary councils would be best for the future of Oxfordshire. They believe that this model would retain local democratic accountability while best serving the needs of all residents, businesses and solving the challenges that lie ahead.

You can read the full statement on the South devolution pages:

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=999e0d93c3&e=eda6ce4f57>

Keeping safe against cyber crime

With increasing numbers of people from any background, age or income caught out by online scams, cyber crime is a real concern for many of our residents.

If you know someone who is unsure of what they can do to stay safe online then our Community Safety team can help out.

For more information about cyber crime see TVP's cyber crime page at

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=d77734fe07&e=eda6ce4f57>

There is also valuable information available at Cyber Streetwise:

<https://www.cyberaware.gov.uk/>

This is just a long brief summary of the work we are doing.

Editor - Cllr Ian White (ian.r.white@btinternet.com) Twitter feed: @IanWhite_DC