

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

August 2017.

Planning Matters.

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)

Joint work of Oxfordshire councils, pulling together Oxfordshire's infrastructure, as existing (stage 1) now published on website. Current stage working on what our priorities are for infrastructure up to 2031 and potential in the pipeline up to 2050 (stage 2). This is an evidence document to all our Local Plans.

Joint Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire (JSPO)

The Growth Board agreed to receive a business case for the production of a Joint Spatial Plan by all Oxfordshire authorities. Such a plan could become a statutory document if all councils agree to that. It would be a strategic document, pulling together adopted and emerging Local Plans and setting the scene for growth in the future - up to 2050 and beyond. As our Local Plans cannot work in isolation, it would help to co-ordinate policy making and infrastructure (including help Utility companies) to help delivery of growth, assist in securing funding for infrastructure and it is fundamental to our Duty to Cooperate (DTC). It needs to be seen in the context of the Government's suggestion about the Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor.

NIC Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor discussion paper

We will need to comment on this paper from the National Infrastructure Commission. Discussion about the potential for a strategic corridor strategy and potential governance arrangements, ensuring local democracy.

Enforcement

- 39 new cases opened
- 28 cases closed
- Six cases closed were more than six months old

Our six week performance was 85 per cent this month (target 80 per cent). This includes a site visit for all new cases within our priority targets and to assess whether a breach has occurred. The number of new cases remains high this month and although we closed more cases than last month we ended the month with eleven more cases on the books.

Upcoming public appeals

Tetsworth – Inquiry for a traveller site of 12 pitches outside the Green Belt scheduled for 6 and 7 June has been postponed by the Planning Inspectorate until Autumn. New dates: 21-24 November.

Venue – Tetsworth Memorial Hall

CABI, Crowmarsh – Awaiting decision

Benson – appeal against refusal of outline application for 130 houses off St Helens Avenue, inquiry runs 1 and 2 August.

Venue – Howbery Park

Long Wittenham – an appeal is taking place against our non-determination of application for 35 homes. There is to be an inquiry scheduled for November 2017.

Judicial Reviews/Challenges

East Hagbourne – 170 units dismissed on appeal - was the subject of a JR by Savills – Judgement just received - refusing permission to pursue.

Waste

Plastic bags can now be used to line food waste bins

Residents in South Oxfordshire can now use plastic bags to line their food waste bins and caddies. Food waste is collected every week and taken to Agrivert's anaerobic digestion plant near Wallingford to be recycled into gas for electricity and fertiliser for local farmland.

The processing plant is now able to accept thin plastic bags, such as carrier bags, bread bags, paper wrappings, or normal pedal bin liners. Residents can also continue to use compostable bags or newspapers to line their caddies and bins, or put food straight in without any liner. Any bags used as liners will be removed at the processing plant and sent to an Energy Recovery Facility to be turned into energy.

Cllr Tony Harbour, Cabinet Member for Waste at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "We know that compostable bags can be expensive and easily tear, so it's great news that the processing plant can now take plastic bags.

"We are very grateful to our residents for their efforts in recycling – which have helped our district to achieve the highest recycling rates in the country. We are always looking for opportunities to work with our partners to improve services for our residents and this is a good example of this."

All cooked and uncooked food can be put into food waste bins. Residents are advised that plastic retail packaging, or anything other than food waste, should not be put in. For example, bacon should be removed from its plastic packet and fruit taken out of punnets.

During 2016/17, 10,024 tonnes of food waste was collected and sent for recycling in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

For further information about food waste recycling and other household waste and recycling collections, see the councils' websites: www.southoxon.gov.uk/waste or call 03000 610610.

Council tax discount review

Over the next few weeks we will be checking that everyone who currently claims a 25 per cent single person discount on their council tax is entitled to do so.

This review will involve us working with credit reference agencies to check that our records are accurate and that people are only receiving the discounts they are entitled to.

We will be encouraging anyone that currently receives a discount to contact us if they're unsure about their entitlement to avoid any action being taken at - sodc.counciltax@secure.capita.co.uk / 0345 302 2313

This is part of our continuing work to prevent and detect fraud on behalf of our residents.

Grants

Grants Scheme Awards

Five play areas are set to receive a facelift as part of a £423,000 boost for community facilities across South Oxfordshire. South Oxfordshire District Council has awarded grants to 13 projects to benefit local residents with play areas in Benson, Berinsfield, Hagbourne, Long Wittenham and Little Milton all receiving funding.

Grants have also been awarded for a replacement pavilion in Ewelme and £170,000 needed to carry out a much-needed roof replacement at Wallingford Corn Exchange. Funding will also help pay for replacement facilities at clubs and village halls in Lewknor, Benson, Peppard Stoke Row, Sandford on Thames, Wallingford and Watlington.

The full awards were:

Benson Parish Council - £6,050 for play area improvements

Berinsfield Parish Council - £33,922 for play area improvements

Corn Exchange Wallingford Ltd and Sinodun Players - £170,000 towards a replacement roof and heating system

Ewelme Parish Council - £75,000 for the rebuilding of Ewelme Pavilion

Hagbourne Village Hall - £10,000 for village hall play area improvements

Lewknor Village Hall - £4,585 for replacement doors

Long Wittenham Parish Council - £7,291 for play area improvements

Little Milton Parish Council - £50,000 for play area improvements

Millstream Day Centre (Benson) - £17,590 for a replacement kitchen

Peppard Stoke Row Cricket Club - £2,765 for a replacement cricket roller

Sandford on Thames Village Hall - £1,799 for a storage shed

The Watlington Club - £19,453 – for replacement squash court flooring, fire doors and lawn aerator

Wallingford Rowing Club - £24,882 – for replacement boat launching platforms

Cllr Elizabeth Gillespie, Cabinet Member for Grants at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: “This funding achieves our goals to make a real difference in our communities across South Oxfordshire, helping ensure existing facilities are upgraded and that new ones become available for residents to use.”

“The next round of grant funding is now open for applications - we’ve still got more than £105,000 available so I urge groups with a project that will benefit the local community to contact our grants team on 01235 422644.”

Community groups have until 6 September to apply for a minimum of £1,000 – for more information visit southoxon.gov.uk/grants.

Grants for rural community projects

Last month we reported that Grant funding up to £75,000 was available from the LEADER Programme for farmers, foresters, businesses and community groups in rural Oxfordshire. Good news; they can now apply for even more grant funding for projects which support the local economy.

Individual projects can now apply for up to £100,000 funding from Oxfordshire LEADER and, under exceptional circumstances, they may qualify for even more money. The scheme aims to support a wide range of rural activities including: farm productivity and diversification, forestry productivity, tourism, community services, heritage and culture and small business

development. Oxfordshire LEADER would particularly welcome applications that will revive local waterways, support local food markets, create vibrant villages, or unlock the potential of woodlands.

To find out if your project could qualify for this funding visit www.oxfordshireleader.org.uk. All grants must be allocated by March 2019, so don't delay in finding out more.

You can also find out more at the Oxfordshire LEADER information event on Tuesday 22 August at Faringdon Old Town Hall (SN7 7HL) – drop in any time from 10am until midday.

The Oxfordshire LEADER Programme is open to applicants until March 2019. Anyone with a viable idea is being urged to contact Oxfordshire LEADER Programme Manager Sophie Milton by calling 01235 422245 or via oxfordshire.leader@southandvale.gov.uk.

Elizabeth Gillespie, Chairman of the Oxfordshire Local Action Group said: “We know there are lots of projects across Oxfordshire which could benefit from this funding and support our local communities. To ensure we support as wide a variety of projects as possible we’ve increased the amount that individual schemes can apply for to £100,000, with even more money available in exceptional circumstances.

“We’ve got £1.5 million available but this must be allocated by March 2019 so I urge anyone with a viable scheme to get in touch and start the application process as soon as possible.”

Leisure

New £353,000 pool changing area open at Thame Leisure Centre

Swimmers at Thame Leisure Centre are enjoying using an upgraded changing area, thanks to a £353,000 investment from South Oxfordshire District Council.

The main changing and shower areas have been significantly improved, while new bench seating, cubicles, lockers, toilets and dryers have also been added. New ceilings, including LED lighting, along with significant redecoration, have also resulted in a better overall environment in the changing area.

Cllr Lynn Lloyd, Cabinet Member for Leisure at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: “I’m sure swimmers at Thame Leisure Centre will appreciate their new changing facilities. This upgrade marks a real improvement to the overall environment of the changing area in the centre and highlights our ongoing commitment to providing the best leisure facilities for all our residents.”

Reminder - Wallingford Riverside outdoor pool now open

The heated outdoor swimming pool by Wallingford Bridge has opened its doors. The site features a 23 metre pool, changing rooms, refreshments and a campsite. Jubilee Splash Park has been open for a while for younger children to enjoy.

A swim costs just £4.45 for adults, £2.85 for junior/seniors or £13.40 for a family swim (two adults and two children). Regular swimmers are also able to take advantage of a season pass for £69 for adults and just £34 for juniors and seniors.

Riverside Outdoor Pool is now open until 3 September* at the following times:

Monday - Friday 7am-6pm

Saturday-Sunday 9am-6pm

*subject to adverse weather conditions

For more information about Riverside Park and Pools please

visit <http://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/south-oxfordshire/riverside-park-and-pools> or call 01491 835232.

Information leaflet on rats and mice available

Rats and mice can be highly destructive as they can cause structural damage by gnawing and burrowing. Our Environmental Protection Team can help residents by investigating properties and gardens where signs of harbourage or evidence is reported.

The team has produced a handy booklet that explains what signs to look out for and tips for preventing any problems.

You can download the booklet from here:

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=528bce359f&e=eda6ce4f57>

For any further information, you can contact the team on 01235 422403 or by email:

env.health@southandvale.gov.uk

Staff Volunteer in Berinsfield

Following on from the staff volunteering open day, our participation team spent a whole day helping out at the Berin Children's Centre in Berinsfield. The team got stuck into clearing, sanding down and repainting two large sheds and a wendy house. They also cut back brambles and cleared away rubbish making the whole outside area safer for children to play.

The team managed to make such a difference in one day that the Managing Director of Employment Action Group who runs the Centre said passers-by had noticed and thought it looked brilliant!

Other teams are also planning on spending a day volunteering in their local communities.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

We've updated our Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) by reviewing all previous assessments and taking into account the revisions made to national guidance in 2015 which included a change to the definition of Travellers for planning purposes. We prepared the assessment jointly with Vale, Cherwell, Oxford City Councils.

For the Vale, the assessment identifies a need for two additional pitches for households that meets the planning definition of a Gypsy or Traveller and for the South, a need for nine additional pitches is required.

You can view the GTAA on our website:

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=39e237aef7&e=eda6ce4f57>

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