

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

October 2017.

Planning Matters.

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS)

Joint work of Oxfordshire councils, pulling together Oxfordshire's key infrastructure. Stage 1 is now published on County's website (we have link to it) and provides an overview of the infrastructure required 2016 to 2040 and the estimated cost (£9 billion). With £500,000 secured (S106/CIL/LEP/public sector commitments) there is a funding gap of approx. £8.5 billion. Although all the infrastructure is required to deliver growth set out in our local plans up to 2031, further work is underway to rank schemes (stage 2) by categories, e.g. what infrastructure unblocks which housing or jobs. The information also provides a robust evidence base to assist any funding bids and demonstrate the need for investment in Oxfordshire to sustain growth.

Next steps are engagement with key stakeholders in early September and then the Growth Board at the end of September.

National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor

- There is significant national impetus behind proposals for an expressway, especially if it is helping to deliver significantly more housing and jobs between Oxford and Cambridge to support UK economic growth.
- The economic and transport case for improvements seem strong, but environmental impacts need to be considered further.
- No routes have been specifically chosen, but there are a number of potential routes being considered, some of which would better link to our growth proposals at Didcot Garden Town and in the central area of South Oxfordshire, edge of Vale.
- Each council has taken an informal view (considered by Cabinet members); South; if the NIC recommend the upgrade of the existing A34 and a northerly route the council support. However, if the NIC are minded to suggest a route south of Oxford City, then the council wants to engage with them asap.
- Vale; the council does not support the upgrade of the existing A34 or an alternative northerly route, but considers there is opportunity for a route south of Oxford and wish to be involved at an early stage.
- A NIC recommendation is expected later this year.

Development Management

- Average of 33 applications per day received through August (644 in total). This is an increase on the June average of 28 per day.
- The 24 hour turnaround of applications has not been maintained over the past month due to increased volumes, officers leaving the council and annual leave.

Monitoring Progress

August 2017 (as at week ending 3 September 2017)

- Majors: 59% decided within 13 weeks against local target of 70% (national target 60%)

- Minors: 83% decided within eight weeks against local target 75% (national target 65%)
- Others: 89% decided within eight weeks against a local target 90% (national target 80%)
- Appeals dismissed: 63% against our local target 74% (national target 60%)

Enforcement August · 45 new cases opened · 36 cases closed · 13 cases closed were more than six months old Our six week performance was 97 per cent this month (target 80 per cent). 11 cases, were resolved through voluntary compliance. These included the removal of illegal adverts in Didcot, Wallingford and Chasey Heath. The tidying of land in Berinsfield, restoration of levels in a garden in Henley and various compliance with planning conditions in Crowell, Thame, Henley, Waterstock and Stadhampton. Five cases were not expedient to pursue: the siting of a residential LPG tank in Harpsden, car park surfacing and a change in materials on a residential extension in in Didcot, the height of a fence in Wheatley and archaeological investigations prior to permission in Wallingford.

Appeals - Public Inquiries

- Thames Farm, Shiplake – Decision received on 2 August - Inspector allowed the appeal for 95 houses finding we had 2.998 years housing land supply. He did not support concerns raised on landscape and highways grounds. We have challenged the Inspector's decision and are waiting for the courts to now consider our challenge.
- CABI, Crowmarsh – appeal against refusal of new offices and residential development was allowed this development, no costs awarded.
- Long Wittenham land off Fieldside Track– appeal against non-determination of 35 unit scheme strongly opposed by parish council and local residents. Inquiry scheduled for 14-17 November. A recommendation will be referred to Planning Committee on 27/9
- Benson – 130 houses off St Helens Avenue – RAF Benson and the MOD strongly objected – the Inspector accepted we do not have a 5 YHLS but dismissed this appeal on noise grounds.
- Tetsworth - traveller site of 12 pitches (outside the Green Belt) originally scheduled for the 6-7 June has been postponed by until 21-24 November.
- We have recently settled two awards of costs in respect of appeal decisions at Goats Gamble Woodcote (one dwelling) and High Street Wheatley (one dwelling through conversion of an outbuilding). The costs were both in the region of £5000. We have received another full award of costs for two houses (adjacent to the church) in Watlington – this could be in the region of £20,000.

Endorsement from the Food Standards Agency

We are one of only 24 district councils to have completed all the food hygiene inspection programmes for the year according to the Food Standards Agency.

As a result of our hard work, we have ensured that 95 per cent of food businesses were considered to be compliant with food hygiene laws. 14 businesses were subject to enforcement notices and 800 received written warnings. Seven locations were temporarily closed to address serious issues and we took three prosecutions following significant breaches of food hygiene laws.

You can read the FSA's full monitoring data from here. <http://southandvale.us8.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=a8c29ad2c1&e=eda6ce4f57>

For any further information, please contact Diane Moore, Food and Safety Manager, by email or phone 01235 422116.

Government funding for homelessness

The funding we receive from government has increased significantly to help prevent homelessness. Our council is successful in preventing homelessness and have been awarded more money to continue our good work.

The table below illustrates the significant increase in funding over the next two years:

2017/18 estimated grant award	£ 14,676.48
2017/18 actual grant award	£144,134.71
2018/19 actual grant award	£165,840.99

We know the risk of people becoming homeless is increasing each year and, with the extra funding, we are able to allocate more money on prevention. For more information please contact Phil Ealey.

Community Safety Partnership

Safeguarding and prevention

We have produced and distributed 1,000 leaflets and air fresheners to taxi companies and drivers telling them what to do if they suspect they are being hired to traffic vulnerable passengers to work against their will or being abused. The leaflet provides information on what to look out for, who to tell and where they can find more information on safeguarding.

Use this link to see the leaflet. <http://southandvale.us8.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=039d256851&e=eda6ce4f57>

For more information on how we help safeguard vulnerable people you can read our website. <http://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=d8147eefd2&e=eda6ce4f57>

Annual Plan

We have approved The South and Vale Community Safety Partnership annual plan for 2017/18. The plan focuses on how we support vulnerable people. Take a look and find out more about the community safety team projects by visiting the website.

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=ced49c5aff&e=eda6ce4f57>

You can contact Karen Brown for further information on the leaflets and annual plan.

Science Vale at TransforMOTION

As part of our partnership with Bosch UK, Cllr John Cotton attended and spoke at the recent TransforMOTION event at Somerset House in London. John spoke on how Science Vale UK and Didcot Garden Town are working with international science and technology organisations, including Bosch, to create new solutions for the region.

The event was open to the public and featured talks from a wide range of industry leaders and gave visitors first hand experience with Bosch's innovative transport solutions for the future - including light electric vehicles such as e-bikes, autonomous pods and microclimate monitoring systems to help improve air quality.

You can find out more information on the TransforMOTION event here.

<http://southandvale.us8.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=a107937529&e=eda6ce4f57>

Councillor grants - applications needed

We've started receiving applications for councillor grants and have made our first three decisions with payments now on their way.

Don't forget to spread the word about the grant councillors have available by directing people to our website www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants or call 01235 422405.

The deadline for groups to apply is 20 December - only 11 weeks away!

Go Active Gold are getting great results

In the past 18 months, 1,847 people from 71 rural villages across both districts have engaged with Go Active Gold activities. The Go Active Gold team aim to encourage people aged 60 and over living in rural areas to live more active lifestyles. The team has introduced 28 more villages to the scheme and over 100 people took up our £5 swim offer we provided with our GLL partners.

Here are the top five things Go Active Gold users told us they like most about the scheme:

- its close to where they live
- exercising with people their own age
- improved health and fitness
- doing an activity that caters for their own ability
- making new friends.

For more information please contact Hendriette Knouwds.
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