

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

**May 2018.**

**Planning**

**Land Supply Figure.**

Under government planning rules set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), all local planning authorities should have an up-to-date deliverable five-year housing land supply.

Our latest housing completion survey shows that 967 homes were built and finished in 2017/18, a third more than the previous year's figure of 722, when the council was unable to demonstrate a five-year supply. This means that our Housing Land Supply now stands at 5.4 years.

Cllr Felix Bloomfield, South Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet Member for Planning, said: "It is good news for South Oxfordshire that we can currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This will help us to fight speculative development on sites which are not the most suitable or preferred, whilst continuing to deliver on housing growth.

"While this is not a significant over-supply and there are outside forces that can affect supply, we are working hard to ensure that this can be sustained moving forward."

**Monitoring Progress March 2018**

- Majors: 65% decided within 13 weeks against local target of 70% (national target 60%)
- Minors: 83% decided within eight weeks against target 75% (national target 65%)
- Others: 91% decided within eight weeks against target 90% (national target 80%)
- Appeals dismissed: 63% against our local target 74% (national target 60%)

**Enforcement action March:**

- 29 new cases opened
- 36 cases closed
- 14 cases closed were more than six months old

Our six week performance improved significantly this month rising to 91 per cent (target 80 per cent) which is great news.

13 cases were closed as no breach of planning control. Of the breaches identified 5 cases were closed after retrospective planning permission was granted and 9 cases were resolved through voluntary compliance. 7 investigations were found to be not expedient to pursue.

We currently have several cases with enforcement action pending – these include the re-service of an enforcement notice at Long Wittenham, and service of enforcement notices at

Mounthill Farm Tetsworth and Little Hill Cottage Harpsden. We are also continuing to work with both OCC and Wokingham Borough Council to resolve the illegal display of lights on Henley Bridge

### **Appeals - Public Inquiries**

Results awaited

- Benson – an appeal relating to site known as BEN5 for 120 units (to the north of Blacklands Road) was heard at an Inquiry which opened on 20 February. The appeal has been recovered (called in by SoS).
- Crowmarsh – an appeal relating to a site off Benson Lane Crowmarsh Gifford for 150 units opened on 27 March and sat for 3 days. Following legal advice, we did not defend our reasons for refusal – however the Parish and a local action group appeared as Rule 6 parties. The appellants have submitted a costs claim for £225,000 and a revised planning application for the same development.
- Emmer Green – an appeal relating to a site off Kiln Lane for 245 units is scheduled to open on 27 March.
- Sonning Common – an appeal relating to a site off Kennylands Road for 90 units is scheduled to open on 10 April and will be held at Henley Rugby Club.

### **Forthcoming Inquiries**

- Tetsworth - an appeal for a traveller site comprising 12 pitches originally was deferred in November 2017 and is now scheduled for August 2018.
- Further inquiries are scheduled for sites in Didcot, Chinnor and Shiplake

### **Neighbourhood Plan updates**

Following the vote at Full Council, we have now adopted the Dorchester Neighbourhood Plan into our Development Plan, and we will use it to help decide planning applications in the village.

An examiner has recommended that Benson and Watlington Neighbourhood Plans proceed to referendum on 28 June 2018, subject to modifications.

The public hearing for the Warborough and Shillingford Neighbourhood Plan was held on Monday 30 April and we are now awaiting the examiners report.

The publicity period on the Goring Neighbourhood Plan began last week and people have until 5pm on 7 June to submit their comments.

The Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted and we are hoping to launch the publicity period next week for residents to comment on the Plan.

### **Neighbourhood Planning workshop**

The next workshop for neighbourhood planning groups takes place from 10am to 3pm on Tuesday 15 May. This session will help groups prepare, carry out and analyse surveys, as well ensuring they are aware of data protection and confidentiality issues.

To book a place Neighbourhood Planning Groups should call 01235 422620 or email Jessica Wilmshurst.

### **Waste and Recycling**

Food waste trucks called Munching Molly and Trashosaurus made special stops to two primary schools to visit pupils who came up with their names. Children at John Blandy School in Southmoor and Manor School in Didcot were delighted to see the trucks with their suggested names printed on the side and front.

The trucks are part of a fleet of 12 that have been named by popular public vote after South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils challenged primary school children in both districts to come up with a list of suggestions.

Trashosaurus – was voted most popular in South Oxfordshire, and Munching Molly – came out top in the Vale.

The children who put forward these names each won a family swimming pass for the councils' local leisure centres, courtesy of the councils' contractor GLL, and £150 of book tokens for their school.

The naming challenge was set to celebrate the introduction of the new food waste trucks by the councils' contractors Biffa. Local residents will get to see the trucks, with their names printed on, out and about collecting food waste across the two districts.

Cllr Caroline Newton, South Oxfordshire's Cabinet Member for Housing and Environment, visited Manor School and met Trashosaurus along with the winner and his class.

Cllr Newton said: "It has been wonderful to visit the Manor School and see the children's reaction with the name 'Trashosaurus' printed on. They had lots of questions about the trucks and food waste recycling, and were clearly very excited to see the truck named.

"This whole initiative has been a great way of spreading the recycling message and raising awareness about food waste recycling and why it's so important for people to do this."

During 2017/18 the food waste trucks collected more than ten tonnes of food waste,

#### **Cooking oil collected**

We are now collecting cooking oil alongside food waste. Residents just need to empty the oil into a plastic bottle (no bigger than 1 litre) then put it in inside their food waste caddy when they leave it out for collection. We will only collect from plastic bottles and will not accept oil in glass bottles/jars or any other container.

We'll be promoting this new service to residents over the coming months.

### **First community lottery draw**

More than 800 tickets were sold prior to the first So Charitable Lottery draw last weekend.

The first draw saw 15 people win three free tickets each and raised £430 for local good causes and supporting the voluntary sector.

This is a great start for this initiative!

### **Enforcement.**

South Oxfordshire District Council has successfully prosecuted the owner of a boarding kennels in Cane End, following a number of complaints from pet owners including one about the death of a dog.

Simon Herbert pleaded guilty to running an unlicensed animal boarding establishment at Oxford Magistrates' Court on Tuesday (1/5) and was fined £300 with a contribution to costs of £700 and a victim surcharge of £30.

Mr Herbert of Simon's Pet Services was first licensed by South Oxfordshire District Council to board dogs in 2012. During 2016 the council investigated four complaints from dog owners whose dogs had boarded at Simon's Pets Services.

The complaints related to the death of a dog, the escape of two dogs from the premises, and the physical and emotional care of a puppy. Investigation of the complaints subsequently identified several breaches of the licence conditions.

Simon Herbert applied to renew his animal boarding licence in early January 2017, but in the light of the concerns identified in 2016, the council was satisfied that it would not be appropriate to renew the licence.

In September 2017, the council was contacted by a dog owner whose dog had boarded at Simon's Pet Services during August and September 2017. Simon Herbert later admitted to the council that although he was aware that he needed a licence to board dogs overnight, he had cared for between four and six dogs overnight since the council had refused his licence in January 2017.

Cllr Caroline Newton, cabinet member for Housing and Environment at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "Anybody looking after animals has a legal and moral duty to provide a decent level of care. I hope this case will act as a warning that we aren't just here to process licence applications – we will prosecute anybody who doesn't maintain the levels of care expected by the council and by the pets' owners."

### **Housing team win silver award**

Well done to our housing needs team who have achieved a prestigious silver award from the National Practitioners Support Service for the work they do to help prevent the most vulnerable people becoming homeless.

We are only one of 24 councils, out of the 326 councils in the country, to achieve silver or gold and it builds on our previous success of winning a bronze award last year.

The team will pick up their silver award in July.

### **Superfast broadband almost complete**

More than 96 per cent of homes and businesses in the Vale and just over 95 per cent in South can now access superfast broadband.

The latest communities to benefit from the upgrade have been in Wantage, Rowstock and Coleshill in Vale and Russells Water, Maidensgrove and Stonor in South.

Improving broadband has been a long-term priority for us and we have contributed £25,000 from Vale and £1 million from South to the second phase of the plan.

The remaining funds have come from BT, county council, government and local enterprise partnerships.

For further details on the partnership go to the BBfO website.

### **Thames Valley Police.**

#### **Doorstep crime**

Following a recent incident involving a suspicious door-to-door jewellery buyer, our community safety team has sent out the following advice from the police. Please would you help spread the guidance to your communities:

look through the door viewer or window to see who is outside  
if you decide to open the door keep the door-chain on  
check the caller's identity  
call the organisation's phone number (by independently looking up first) to confirm their identity - remember official visitors will wait while you check  
do not feel pressured into buying any items or services at the door  
do not let them into your house or give them access to any private rooms  
do not give them information on where valuables are kept  
For more information on how you can protect yourself and others, please visit the Thames Valley Police website.

#### **Action Counters Terrorism (ACT)**

Thames Valley Police has urged local communities to help tackle terrorism and has asked for our help to spread the word.

There is a new quick and easy online form at [www.gov.uk/ACT](http://www.gov.uk/ACT) or people can phone 0800 789 321.

### **Grants application dates confirmed**

REMINDER - We've confirmed the dates that groups can apply for community grants during 2018:

Capital grants - £811,000 available:

20 June to 30 July (round two - budget permitting)

15 October to 30 November (potential round three - budget permitting)

Councillor grants - £5,000 available per councillor: 30 May (estimated) to 3 January 2019

### **Reaching thousands on Facebook**

REMINDER - Keep up to date with the latest news from both councils by following our South and Vale Facebook pages.

During the recent snow a post telling people about disruption to bin collections reached over 24,000 people and details about the emergency support available for those sleeping rough reached over 37,000 people.

We've also had significant success for posts about fly-tipping, a food safety investigation (see South News), recycling advice, and announcements for major projects such as the Orchard Centre and Abbey Meadow pool.

Please help to spread the news by sharing our posts with your Facebook friends.

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