

Title	District Councillors' Report to Thame Town Council
Authors	Clrs Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bretherton & Kate Gregory
Date	June 2025

SODC IT Changeover

The process of moving away from Capita to an in-house IT service has now completed.

Many of the Council's IT systems were unavailable to the public (and internally to services) recently while they were transferred to in-house hosting.

The land charges downtime will extend for a longer period as they will need more time to catch up once all other teams have updated their systems following the downtime.

Performing Arts grant awards

Last year, SODC made a budget of 60k available for performing arts around the district. 4 applications from Thame were successful:

- **Thame Players:** Acting workshops for new /young people to participate. £2000
- **Music in the Park:** £300
- **Thame Players:** dressing rooms improvements: £4040
- **Lord Williams Festival Chorus** Choral workshops and performance £800

Phoenix Trail CIL funding approved

To approve £27,975 from the South Oxfordshire District Council's pilot Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Grant Scheme, as set out in the Council's 2023/24 capital budget and additional amount of £222,023 approved in the Council's 2025/26 budget setting to increase the current pilot Community Infrastructure Levy Grant Scheme pot to support the Sustrans application.

This is in relation to the grant request from Sustrans for £249,998 towards the Phoenix Trail – Van Dieman's Road gateway project.

The CIL funds will be used:

- to upgrade the surfacing where surface movement and cracking has been identified
- to build a retaining structure to widen the path by 1m
- some landscaping

By increasing the path width and improving the surface quality, Sustrans will make it more accessible for people with disabilities.

The wider path will give more space for users to pass one another comfortably without conflict.

Joint Local Plan hearings

The public hearings for the South and Vale Joint Local Plan took place this week.

This stage of the examination involves our appointed Planning Inspectors holding sessions to hear from the Councils and other participants about whether the local plan is sound and has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements.

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Local Government Reorganisation

The SODC public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation launched on Wednesday 4 June and will run for six weeks. This is for the Ridgeway Council proposal, merging South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire.

There are 2 other proposals – unitary Oxfordshire which the county council will publicise and Greater Oxford which Oxford City will publicise.

These are not consultations as it is not the councils who will make the decision, but the Minister.

Capital grant scheme now open!

To support community projects that help improve the quality of life for local people, the SODC Capital Grant Scheme opened on 2 June for applications of up to £75,000.

The grant gives organisations a financial boost towards capital expenditure such as making improvements to buildings or play areas.

Applicants must show how their projects will help improve the quality of life for people in South Oxfordshire through projects that; support thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, provide infrastructure that meets local need, that take action on climate change and nature recovery, and improve participation, accessibility and accountability.

Organisations eligible to apply are:

- Town and parish councils
- Non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies
- Community-based organisations

The Capital Grant Scheme is open for applications until **25 July**. Applicants can apply online through our website, southoxon.gov.uk/grants where the full guidance is available to help submit the best possible application. Thank you for sharing our social media messages on the grant.

Housing Delivery Action Plan 2025/26

Our Housing Action Plan for 2025/26 outlines a targeted and strategic approach to meeting local housing needs. It focuses on increasing the supply of affordable housing, enhancing collaboration with housing providers, and outlines strategic steps to support the decarbonisation of homes across the area.

Through this plan, we are committed to improving access to safe, affordable, and energy-efficient homes for our communities

Our action plan can be viewed here: [HDS-action-plan-2025-26.pdf](#)

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Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation

SODC are inviting people to have their say on proposed objectives for the new joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2028.

Minimising the use of temporary accommodation and increasing the provision of genuinely affordable, long-term homes are a core focus of the councils' work to reduce homelessness and end rough sleeping.

Clr Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Cabinet Member for Housing at South Oxfordshire District Council said: "We want the new objectives to further strengthen how we help reduce homelessness and prevent it as well as support rough sleepers who are vulnerable and have complex needs.

"Keeping the use of temporary accommodation to a minimum is challenging – but it's an important focus in helping people who are at risk of homelessness. We've been making huge strides already by purchasing more temporary accommodation to reduce the use of nightly-charged temporary accommodation.

"This strategy underpins our work on providing homes to those who need them most. We will continue to find long-term, genuinely affordable homes for people.

Thoughts and feedback on the Strategy from external stakeholders are invaluable. A consultation window to provide comment is now open and runs until 11.59pm on 16 June.

To take part in the consultation go to southandvale.gov.uk/homelessnessandroughsleepingstrategy/

SODC Annual Meeting

Following the SODC annual meeting, the cabinet has been confirmed as:

- Councillor David Rouane– Leader, plus legal and democratic services and communications
- Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers – Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Hub
- Councillor Tony Worgan– Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration
- Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker – Cabinet Member for Finance and Property Assets
- Councillor Georgina Heritage – Cabinet Member for Communities
- Councillor Sam James-Lawrie – Cabinet Member for Environment
- Councillor Leigh Rawlins – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Policy and Programmes
- Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson – Cabinet Member for Planning

Councillor David Bretherton continues as Chair of Planning Committee.