

SODC Monthly Report - October 2018

Cllr Caroline Newton

Planning

Following a consultation in July, the Government has confirmed that councils in Oxfordshire now only need to provide a three-year supply of land for housing, instead of the five-year supply normally required by the government. It had been SODC's inability to demonstrate that we could provide adequate housing over the next 5 years that had allowed some developers to win planning permission for developments on appeal after we had rejected their applications.

The government has agreed to this change while we work together with the other Oxfordshire councils (the three other District Councils, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council) on a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, the document that will address how we collectively plan to deliver 100,000 homes across the county by 2031, which was agreed as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.

This means it is now much less likely for developers to win planning permission for developments we consider unsuitable.

Capital Grants applications open soon

SODC's Capital Grants scheme opened on Monday 1 October and we are encouraging any groups with a project which could benefit from this funding to get in touch with our Grants Team before they start an application.

There's £145,000 available to help fund a variety of facilities and improvements, such as upgrading a community hall or improving a play area. For more information see our grants pages.

New legislation coming for HMOs

New legislation comes in on 1 October, which affects landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

As a licensing authority, SODC grants licences to larger HMOs that are three or more storeys and occupied by five or more people forming at least two separate households.

From 1 October, the legislation has changed so that smaller properties used as HMOs will also require a licence. Other changes to be introduced include national minimum sizes for rooms used as sleeping accommodation and the requirement for landlords to adhere to council refuse schemes.

If you have any information on HMOs in your area that may require a licence, please email our Environmental Health Team env.health@southandvale.gov.uk or by phoning 01235 422403.

It's a yellow letter day in South as residents are urged to confirm their details

More than 87,000 properties have responded to our 'Household Enquiry' letter which required people to confirm who currently lives in their property. However, we're yet to hear from 34,000 homes so we have sent reminder letters to those properties.

We need this information to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so in future elections.

If people get a reminder letter, or if they can't find the original letter, they should visit householdresponse.com/southandvale to confirm their details are correct or, if not, provide the correct information. Any household which had not confirmed their details by 7 October could receive a visit from one of our officers to confirm the details.

£1.2million recovered

During 2017/18 we recovered more than £1.2million in council tax arrears thanks to tough enforcement action against non-payers.

We issued 5,000 court summonses to people who had repeatedly failed or refused to pay their council tax. Magistrates then granted liability orders against almost 4,000 of those individuals meaning we could take enforcement action, including the use of bailiffs, to retrieve the money. We of course offer support to those who are genuinely struggling to pay.

New service to help victims and witnesses to report hate crime - Reminder

Victims and witnesses of hate crime who are not comfortable talking to the police now have an alternative place to go to report incidents in confidence.

Hate crimes can be reported to specially trained staff at familiar locations across our district. Incidents can be reported in person or by telephone. Staff will be available to talk about the incident and can offer to report it to the police on their behalf. They will also refer people to Victims First, a service dedicated to ensuring that victims or witnesses receive the support they need to cope with and recover from their experience.

To find out where your nearest reporting centre is visit southoxon.gov.uk/hatecrime.

Recycling roadshows came to a town near you

Recycling experts from South Oxfordshire District Councils have been out and about myth-busting over what can and can't be recycled in the districts as part of National Recycle Week 2018 (24 – 30 September).

Events took place across southern Oxfordshire gave residents the chance to ask the experts about recycling collections and what happens to the recycling after waste crews have collected it.

More information about waste and recycling can be found on the councils' recycling pages. People can also download the Binzone app to smartphones or tablets which will tell what can and can't be recycled and also when bins are due to be collected.

Cooking oil recycling

We've just introduced a new cooking oil recycling service for residents as part of our food waste collections.

After cooking and once it has cooled, any leftover oil can be poured into a plastic bottle no bigger than one litre in size. The bottle and its contents can then be placed into the kerbside food waste caddy, along with other food waste, and put out for the weekly collection. For those who don't want to use a plastic bottle, oil can also be poured straight into the caddy along with other food waste.

One litre of cooking oil can generate enough electricity to make 240 cups of tea!

Gambling policy review

We are currently reviewing our joint gambling act policy which is due for renewal in January 2019. The policy sets out how we manage gambling premises and permits across South and Vale.

We are proposing just three minor changes to the policy and people now have until until midnight on Monday 8 October to comment on the updated document at <https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=64&o=9492&url=https%3A%2F%2Fsurvey.southandvale.gov.uk%2Fs%2Fgambling%2F&a=0>