

District Councillor Report Haseley Brook ward

05 February 2024

Cllr Georgina Heritage



Meetings and activity

I attended a Community Grants briefing in January, but there were no full council meetings. There is a very busy council schedule in February, with ongoing work including the Joint Local Plan, the Corporate Plan and, of course, financial budgets. There will also be several committee meetings in February and I expect to sit on Licensing, Planning and Community Grants panels throughout the month.

On a local level, I was very disappointed that the Bull in Great Milton was not able to achieve permission within the anticipated timescale for its planned improvements. I am very keen to see this pub survive and thrive for the benefit of the whole community in and around the village, and I was happy to engage with the head of department at the parish council's request. Due to statutory legislation regarding species surveys, planning consent for any demolition/building work cannot be granted until these surveys are completed at a specific time of the year. SODC's Planning Development Manager, who reviewed the application, is also very keen to support our local pubs and she looks forward to ensuring the application is processed in a timely manner when it can be resubmitted.

Joint Local Plan 2041

The consultation for the JLP is ongoing and the deadline has been extended to **26th February**.

There has been a series of drop-in events across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, to encourage residents to ask questions and get involved in the consultation process. Haseley Brook's most local event was in Thame on 30th January, but there is still an upcoming event in Didcot for anyone who might like to attend. This will be on Saturday 10th February, 11am – 4pm in the Berro Lounge, Orchard Shopping Centre.

There is also a special invitation-only event in Didcot on 8th February for community groups, geared towards a range of communities that the councils may have previously failed to reach, and the content is tailored towards people who are not familiar with Local Plans. This will run from 2.30pm – 5pm at Didcot Civic Hall. If you know or are part of a group that you think could benefit from this, please let me know and I can forward an invitation/link. Alternatively, if you have any questions regarding the event itself or the Joint Local Plan more broadly, you can contact Oliver Moore at oliver.moore@southandvale.gov.uk.

Requiring sustainable development; protecting and enhancing our countryside; setting higher energy efficiency standards for new buildings, and prioritising more sustainable transport options – these are some of the benefits planned for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse in the new JLP.

Among many topics the Joint Local Plan covers are some updated, new and innovative approaches such as:

- More of the housing built in the districts to be affordable housing to help those struggling to get on the property ladder;
- Setting ambitious targets, beyond the national standards, to ensure developments positively contribute to the local environment and wildlife, and deliver on climate action;
- New policies to identify and enhance our most tranquil places, and protect our dark skies by minimising light pollution for both residents and wildlife.

More information about the JLP consultation can be found at southandvale.gov.uk/JLP, where you will now also find a virtual “exhibition” for the consultation.

South Oxon – England’s Top Recycling Area

Residents in South Oxfordshire are officially the best recyclers in the country, with residents in the Vale of White Horse a close third, according to a government league table published last week.

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) officially published the [recycling performance league table](#), and South Oxfordshire was ranked the highest for household waste recycling rates in 2022/23 at 61.6%, with Vale of White Horse in third place with 60.9%. Each council has been in the top 5 for the last five years. Nine out of the ten councils with the highest recycling rates are Lib Dem led.

SODC’s Lib Dem Cabinet Member for Environment, Sue Cooper, is proud of our residents’ accomplishment and our sustained commitment to a “reduce, reuse, recycle” ethos, but knows there’s more work to do. Our new waste strategy will aim to further this good work, and residents are encouraged to keep reducing and reusing.

Alongside the high performing collection rates for both councils, a recent local waste satisfaction survey has produced encouraging results for the councils’ household waste collections, indicating a high level of resident approval. 82% of respondents expressed satisfaction, or high satisfaction, with the overall quality of the waste and recycling services provided.