

## **SODC Monthly report - September 2021**

### **Cllr Caroline Newton - Haseley Brook Ward**

#### **Waste**

I know that residents have been frustrated with bin collections over the summer. SODC suspended Garden Waste collections at the start of August, and for many of us the collections of green, black and compost bins have been erratic over the summer as well. I have taken up a number of specific issues with officers at SODC.

Opposition councillors at SODC (including me) have called for an extraordinary meeting of Council to press the administration to explain what they are doing to sort out the problem. Whilst we recognise that the root of it may be a national shortage of HGV drivers, we are concerned that residents are still paying full price for garden waste collections that aren't happening and, through their council tax, for low-standard household waste collections.

The Extraordinary Full Council takes place on Friday 24 September at 2pm. Many residents have contacted me to express their frustration at this state of affairs. If you wish to speak at the meeting, please register by 5pm on 23rd September. Details of how to do this will be available on the agenda which will be published on the SODC website on 16 September.

#### **Civil Parking Enforcement**

The process for local councils take over the enforcement of parking is nearing its conclusion. Responsibility for enforcing on-street parking in this district will be transferred from police to wardens employed by OCC.

#### **Planning**

Cornwell Solar Farm (P20/S3244/FUL): The planning officer in charge of considering this application (located between Stoke Talmage, Tetsworth and the Haseleys) has just indicated that she is minded to recommend approval. The application would then go to the Planning Committee (most likely on 13 October) for consideration. More information is still awaited relating to the application for the Harlesford Solar Farm (near Tetsworth) before the planning officer makes her recommendation on that one.

#### **Grants Schemes**

The Councillor Community Grant Scheme is open to bids until 1 Oct; and will then open again from late November to early February. I have a total of £5000 to distribute to local schemes - with minimum bids set at £250. Do take a look at the Councillor Community Grant page on the SODC website for more information or get in touch with me direct if your organisation or initiative might bid for funding.

Capital Grant Scheme: SODC also runs a scheme for awarding larger sums for capital projects in the district. The total amount this year is £320,000 with maximum bids of £75,000. The Scheme will be open for applications from early November to mid December. Details of how to apply and the scoring criteria will be published in due course. Do get in touch with me if your organisation is considering applying.

#### **Economic Development**

SODC has launched a "state of Business" survey to collect data to help the council understand the ongoing impact of the pandemic - and to inform the use of the remaining £1.2 million Additional Restrictions Grant Funding. You can participate in the survey by searching on the South and Vale Business Support website till 21 Sept - [www.svbs.co.uk](http://www.svbs.co.uk)

Virtual High Streets - SODC is running a project enabling independent businesses to join a dedicated e-commerce platform that will be promoted to consumers district wide. It is funded by Govt's Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

### Housing Needs:

You may recall that, at the start of the COVID lockdown, in March 2020, the Government called for 'Everyone In' - a focused drive to ensure that nobody was left homeless during the crisis. At that point, SODC housing team found emergency accommodation for 89 households. Of those, SODC has moved 71 households to long-term accommodation. This significantly bucks the national trend in which barely a quarter of homeless households housed in March 2020 are now in long-term accommodation. As of the end of August 2021 two households remained in emergency accommodation.

### UK Resettlement Scheme:

Officers at SODC are preparing to award the support contract for the UK Resettlement Scheme for Afghan refugees. Three families will be resettled in this district. The scheme is fully funded by the Government.

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