

South Oxfordshire District Council - Monthly Report October 2021

Cll Caroline Newton, Haseley Brook

Planning:

South Oxfordshire finds itself once again at risk of speculative, uncoordinated development after a ruling from a second planning inspector that SODC has lost its 5 Year Housing Land Supply. This recent appeal ruling (relating to an application in Didcot) followed the decision in July relating to a site in Sonning Common.

SODC continues to claim that it has a 5.33 year supply of housing, but this second inspection found that the true figure is 4.81. SODC seems unable to account for how the numbers can diverge so much. A likely explanation for the loss of the 5 YHLS may well be SODC's delay in adopting its Local Plan 2035, which meant that the construction of new homes fell behind schedule.

This has very grave implications for our district as, without an adequate pipeline of new homes, it is extremely difficult for the council to fight off for large, unplanned developments.

Strategic Planning:

Meanwhile, work is continuing on the next Local Plan (LP2041), with the Call for Sites closing on 30 September.

On larger-scale strategic planning, SODC has responded to two current strategic planning consultations: Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (closes 12 Oct) and the Ox-Cam Arc Vision (closes 14 Oct).

SODC officers have contributed to England's Economic Heartland (EEH) two connectivity studies - Peterborough-Northampton-Oxford and Oxford-Milton Keynes. A third study, covering Swindon-Didcot-Oxford is being commissioned. EEH the sub-regional transport body for the region from Swindon to Cambridge and from Northamptonshire to Hertfordshire which brings together local government and business leaders with the aim of realising the area's economic potential while achieving net zero.

SODC is also responding to the consultation from the water regulators, OFWAT, on strategic regional water resources. The options being considered include the proposal for a reservoir at Abingdon.

Garden waste services:

You will probably be aware that SODC suspended the collection of garden waste at the start of August. With no end in sight, and with so little information being communicated by the administration at the council, the Conservative Group request an emergency meeting of Full Council to review the situation.

Shortly before that council met, SODC announced the service would resume on a monthly basis from w/c 27 Sept, and that an extra 3 months would be added to the term of the current contract with residents.

As we head into the busy autumn period in our gardens, I will continue to keep pressure on SODC to restore the full service asap.

Please make sure report any missed bin collections **before 5pm on the day after collection was due** on tel: 03000 20610610 or email: admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk

Leader of the Council:

Cllr Sue Cooper, Leader of SODC since May 2019, stood down from her role on 7 October, to be replaced by Cllr David Rouane. Cllr Rouane, a Lib Dem councillor from Didcot was previously the

Cabinet member for Housing and Environment, in which role he was responsible for - amongst other things - the collection of waste.

Trees:

At Full Council on 7 Oct, members agreed a new policy for supporting communities to plant trees on SODC land. Details can be found on the SODC website: search 'trees'!

Noise nuisance:

The Environmental Protection team has bought a Noise App to support its investigations of noise nuisance. Residents use it to record alleged noise nuisance and officers can then review the recordings without first having to visit the complainant's home to install recording equipment in the first instance.

Afghan refugees:

SODC is participating in the resettlement of refugees from Afghanistan. So far one family has been welcome to our district, and is receiving intensive support from our Resettlement Officer.

Electric Vehicle Charging:

Joint work continues to install a network of EV charging points in council-owned car park across Oxfordshire. The EV charge points are due to be installed by the end of February 2022.

Engineering:

Work started on the Chalgrove Flood Alleviation scheme on 31 August. It is due to be completed by the end of October.

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