

## **SODC Councillor's Monthly Report March 2018**

**Autonomous vehicle investment.** The government has awarded us £2.5 million for an industry-led research and development project to introduce connected and autonomous vehicles to the districts. Working with MEPC and First Connect we will be providing a driverless shuttle bus service from Didcot to Milton Park for commuters. The 30-month project is commercially viable and could be one of the first services of its kind for visitors and commuters in the UK. More information can be found in the joint press release on the SODC Website

**“PopUp” Business School.** Do you know someone who has a business idea, but no idea where to start? Perhaps you know someone that has started their own business but needs help with building a website or getting more customers? We are supporting a “PopUp” Business School on 19 - 23 March for anyone from South and Vale to attend the workshops for FREE and learn how to start or grow a business without little or any money. The workshops have been organised in partnership with Hammerson and SOHA. Anyone interested can register via the **Pop Up Business School** website.

**Science Vale UK video launch.** To help encourage businesses to relocate to our region, we have produced an exciting new video featuring business leaders and our council leaders to explain how being in Science Vale UK is a major contributor to their success. Watch the video on [Science Vale's website](#).

**2018/19 budget approved.** The budget reports are now available on the SODC website. The headline news is that the SODC share of Council Tax will increase by 4.5% or put another way £5.00 increase for a band D property. SODC has a problem in so much as over the next 5 years they need to take £13M from reserves to balance the budget and this clearly unsustainable.

**Emerging Local Plan 2011-2033.** It has taken longer than expected to review the 2,600 comments from approximately 800 individuals. All responses will be published on the SODC website as soon as possible. There are delays to the Local Plan following deliverability issues with the Chalgrove Airfield proposals. There will be a Cabinet meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the situation. Further details will be provided in due course.

**Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.** SODC's response to Government questions has been supportive in reducing traffic congestion which is harmful to the local economy, but non-committal on routes which need more studies done on them. The siting of routes could have severe impacts on South Oxfordshire which need to be watched and considered carefully.

David Turner  
1st March 2018