

SODC Councillor's Monthly Report June 2018

£1.3m boost for community projects in 2017/18. Last year SODC provided more than £1.3million in grant funding to community projects in South Oxfordshire. Here's a quick summary of how we allocated the money:

Capital Grants. We awarded £715,408 to 19 projects, including £250,000 for a replacement club house at Thame Sports Club, £170,000 for a replacement roof and other improvements at Wallingford Corn Exchange, and £50,000 to refurbish a playground in Little Milton.

Revenue Grants. 17 projects will benefit from £512,000, including £165,620 for the Citizens Advice Bureau, £46,000 for the South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance, and more than £24,000 for Be Free Young Carers.

Councillor Community Grants. £156,000 were awarded to 106 projects, ranging from community events and coaching courses to fencing and flag poles. In Chalgrove Ward money was awarded for a new table tennis table, School playground apparatus and Children's Centre equipment.

To see all the projects SODC funded last year go to the SODC website and search on Grants 2017/18. The grants page gives all the rules attached to and applying for grants.

Council tax and business rates collection results 2017/18. SODC continues to be among the top performers in the country when it comes to collecting council tax and business rates. Last year South Oxfordshire District Council recorded its best ever results for collecting the money during the year it was owed. We collected 98.8 per cent of the council tax owed for 2017/18 and 99 per cent of business rates.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan update. Following the Full Council's decision to review the Local Plan we have started to review and filter the 15 possible strategic allocation sites, including the current strategic sites; previously considered but not progressed sites; and some more recently submitted sites. The sites include:

- Current proposed sites: Culham, Wheatley, Berinsfield and Chalgrove Airfield.
- Previously considered (but not progressed) sites: Thornhill, Wick Farm, Lower Elsfeld, Grenoble Road, Northfields, Harrington and land at Great Western Park.
- Additional sites submitted by developers: land at Emmer Green, Reading, Reading Golf Club, Playhatch at Reading, land off Thame Road, North Weston.

Councillors will be pre-assessing strategic sites at a round table meeting on 20th June. As you know there are doubts about the deliverability of Chalgrove Airfield as Martin Baker

have said that they need the whole airfield to maintain its operations there. Discussions continue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. We await their comments that this will not affect the Growth Board's bid for infrastructure funding for the whole of Oxfordshire. It is still not clear if Homes England will try to Compulsory Purchase the land which is a course of action that Martin Baker will rigorously oppose.

Sessions for parents. The South and Vale Community Safety Partnership is funding a free event for parents, of children who are at primary school, to find out how to keep their child safe online. On Tuesday 3 July e-safety experts Computing Champions will be at Cornerstone Arts Centre to advise parents on the dangers of a variety of technologies in the home and talk to them about how to make their child 'share aware', preventing access to inappropriate content, appropriate use of social media and safe online gaming. There are two sessions available, at 5pm and 6pm. To book their place parents should visit:

Wallingford Riverside Pool. The pool is now open from 7am - 8pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 7am - 6pms on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and from 9am - 6pm at weekends - until Monday 3 September. The Jubilee Splash Park is also open on site for younger children to enjoy. The Riverside Park and Pools are located on the bank of the River Thames and are the perfect place to spend a lazy summer day. The site features a 23 Metre pool, changing rooms, refreshments and a campsite. A swim costs just £4.50 for adults, £2.90 for junior/seniors or £13.05 for a family swim (two adults and two children). Regular swimmers are also able to take advantage of a season pass for £71 for adults and just £35 for juniors and seniors. For more information about the Riverside Park and Pools please visit the SODC website or call 01491 835232.

Oxford to Cambridge expressway project update. We are expecting the Government to advise its preferred route sometime in July. I personally feel that we should only be looking at a new rail link from Oxford to Cambridge which I feel will satisfy the physical communications needs and avoid approximately 100,000 new houses between Oxford and Cambridge.

David Turner
4th June 2018