

SODC Councillor's Monthly Report September 2019

Local Plan 2011/2034. Cllr Sue Cooper has written a letter to Robert Jenrick MP (the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) in response to a letter from the previous minister, Kit Malthouse MP, on the council's decision on the emerging South Local Plan. In her letter, Cllr Cooper has confirmed the current situation and requested to meet with the new minister and Esther McVey MP to clarify the council's position. The meeting is scheduled for 5th September. The council will be making its decision on October 10th as to whether it will attempt to modify or withdraw the Local Plan submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in March of this year.

How we're helping to tackle climate change. The Climate Emergency Advisory Committees in both districts (South & Vale) are now established and the first formal meetings are due to take place in September - both will be open to the public. The politically balanced committees will consider the councils' environmental impact and look at how we can make sustainable choices to deliver the services we provide to our residents. The date and agenda for the first meetings will be posted on the council websites. To get some of this work started, our Corporate Energy Officer has joined the Policy and Insight team to help assess where sustainable ideas can be put into new and existing policies, strategies and projects – this theme is likely to feature throughout both councils' new Corporate Plans. If you'd like more information on the projects, please contact Michelle Wells, Insight and Policy Manager. Details are on the SODC website.

Audit of accounts. Our unaudited financial accounts for 2018/19 are now available online on our websites for South and Vale. This year, our audited accounts were not available by the 31 July deadline due to a delay by our external auditors. They have written to both South and Vale councils in a joint letter to explain the reasons for the delay and have let us know that the audits will now take place later this month or in September. Once the accounts are audited, we will publish them on our websites.

Electric vehicle charging points consultation. The government has recently published a consultation on electric vehicle smart charging points and regulations. They are proposing that UK charge points have a smart charging function included - meaning that people can charge their car during off-peak periods when electricity demand is low. You can read the consultation and take part here. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/electric-vehicle-smart-charging#history> Comments can be submitted until 11.45pm on 7 October.

Parish & Town Council planning training days. The planning department are running training sessions for town and parish councils at the following times and dates:

Tuesday 17 September at Cornerstones, Didcot

- 2pm-4pm
- 6pm-8pm

Affordable housing update. There's some good news about SOHA - one of our affordable housing providers, they have been named in the top three of a national housing publication's best performing housing associations. In the last year, the Didcot-based organisation, which

has homes across both South and Vale, built 126 new homes in South and 90 new homes in the Vale - the majority for affordable rent and around a quarter of them for shared ownership. You can read the full information on SOHA's website. www.soha.co.uk

Reading transport consultation. Our Planning Policy team will be preparing a response from both district councils to Reading Borough Council's consultation to help form their next Local Transport Plan 2036. If you have any comments, please email the South or Vale team by Friday 6 September. Please also encourage anyone living in your Parish that regularly commutes into Reading to take part. The borough council wants to hear from as many people as possible on how they can help get people to their destination, to make transport in the town more affordable and accessible and to lead a carbon neutral future for Reading. All the details on the consultation and drop-in sessions are available via clconsult.co.uk/transport2036 and its open until Friday 20 September.

Councillor grant scheme is open. The SODC Councillor Grant scheme is now open for applications. I have a budget of £5,000 in total to award to projects or services that will benefit communities. Full details are to be found on the SODC website www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants. So that I can prioritise my finite budget please submit your bids by 1st December 2019. The Grants team will send your clerk some guidance notes shortly, but if you have any questions or queries in the meantime, please email the Community Enablement team or phone 01235 422405.

South Oxfordshire District Council successfully prosecutions. Met Catering Ltd. based in Blackbird Leys were successfully prosecuted for not disposing of waste correctly in February this year. The company were ordered to pay £2,854 after a large pile of rubble and waste was found by workers on land owned by Graham Packaging Plastics Ltd. in Chalgrove. During the investigation, the council found paperwork linking the waste to Jakes takeaway in Blackbird Leys – a business operated by Met Catering Ltd. Bulent Yilmaz, sole director of the Met Catering, admitted to the council that the takeaway premises had recently been refurbished and they had paid for their waste to be taken away. Mr Yilmaz could not provide the details of who removed the waste other than it was someone called 'John' and the company was not able to provide any paperwork on the transfer of waste - something required by law. On 12 August, Met Catering Ltd. pleaded guilty to four charges under Section 34 Environmental Protection Act 1990 relating to their duty of care for waste. They were fined a total of £2,000 plus costs of £804 and a victim surcharge of £50.

In a second case a man was fined after waste was found fly-tipped. He was ordered to pay almost £600 after admitting failing to carry out the required checks when arranging for waste to be taken away from his property. The waste had been found fly-tipped in Garsington. Lee Loveridge, 40, of Plover Drive, Greater Leys, appeared at Oxford Magistrates Court on Monday 12 August, when he pleaded guilty to a charge of breaching Section 34 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, relating to householder duty of care. Magistrates' heard how, on 25 March 2019, a fly-tip of domestic waste had been found in Southend in Garsington, South Oxfordshire. An Enforcement Officer from the South Oxfordshire District Council went to investigate the site and found packaging with labels addressed to Mr Loveridge's daughter.

David Turner, SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward)

1st September 2019