

SODC Councillor's Monthly Report to Berrick Salome Parish Council, July 2016

New plan for South Oxfordshire – let us know what you think

People in South Oxfordshire are being urged to give their views on updated proposals for how the district should meet the need for new housing.

Over the past three years, South Oxfordshire District Council has been preparing its new Local Plan 2032. This is a document that will set out where the main new housing sites in the district should go, as well as the shops, jobs, road improvements and leisure facilities needed for the district. The plan will also include detailed policies the council will use to help decide planning applications for the lifetime of the plan. It is hoped that this will be delivered through the neighbourhood planning process. Since starting work on the new plan thousands of residents, along with local businesses and organisations, have taken part in consultations to help come up with what the District Council believes offers the best mix for the area. The council has now published the first of its “Preferred Options” and a ‘Sustainability Appraisal’ for how the new housing and development should be distributed across the district. People can now have their say on these proposals. The consultation includes seven possible options for a new sustainable settlement of 3,500 new homes. The council’s preferred option is to build a new community on the Chalgrove Airfield. Most of the other options are in the green belt, which the council does not believe is appropriate, and Chalgrove Airfield is close to existing and future employment sites –this is why the council believes it’s the best of the seven options. The deadline for comments is 4.30pm on 19 August 2016. A series of drop in events will be held the nearest of which are:

Chalgrove – Friday 8 July 3-7pm, Chalgrove Village Hall, Baronshurst Drive, Chalgrove, OX44 7TE

Benson – Monday 11 July 3-7pm, Benson Parish Hall (The Lounge), Sunnyside, Benson, OX10 6LZ

Chalgrove Parish Council as you can imagine are very unhappy about this proposal which has implications not just for Chalgrove but also surrounding villages.

A new design for South Oxfordshire

South Oxfordshire District Council has completely re-written its Design Guide to make sure all developments coming along in the next 16 years are well-designed, of a high quality, and will become pleasant and close-knit communities that people will enjoy living in. Developers work all over the country in many different areas, so it’s important to make sure they can fully understand what is appropriate to South Oxfordshire – that’s what the Design Guide is for. The new guide seeks to break the mould of traditional design guides. The new guide is significantly more concise, more visual, and it’s easier to follow and understand. This will make it easier for developers to understand the ambitions and expectations in South Oxfordshire, and be inspired to design interesting and high-quality developments that fully fit in with the character of the district. There is also now strong guidance on the importance and effectiveness of developers providing clear plans and visuals at the start of their applications – this will make it easier for residents to understand what’s being proposed.

To see the new design guide and comment on it, visit www.southoxon.gov.uk/designguide

Wallingford Outdoor Swimming Pool.

A reminder that it is now open for the summer season.

District Councils set out proposals for Unitary District based councils to secure more powers and funding for Oxfordshire residents

Oxfordshire's District Councils have set out their proposals to secure more powers and funding for the people of the county. All five district councils – Cherwell, Oxford, South, Vale and West – have released videos explaining why District Unitaries would be best for their areas. The five councils have also launched a new website, www.oxfordshire.vision. The aim is to give Oxfordshire residents easy access to all the information about the proposals and how they will affect them. The County Council has also set out its vision for a Unitary Oxfordshire details of which are to be found on their website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Capital grants

We awarded £766,787 of our £1,000,000 budget to 23 projects - that's £219,101 more than in 2014/15. Projects ranged from things as small as defibrillators to large-scale work like a complete revamp of Wallingford Sports Trust's changing rooms.

Changing how we're engaging

We're currently reviewing our corporate policy on consultation and engagement, which are two things that help us better understand local needs and expectations and give residents the opportunity to feed back on our services. It's not changed very much at all, but the biggest change is that it's been made easier to read.

Queen's birthday celebrations.

You will recall that we recently wrote to parish councils to offer them some money towards any community events they're holding to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. 71 out of 86 parish and town councils in South Oxfordshire took us up on the offer, and 42 out of 67 in Vale. We gave out approximately £50,000 in South and just under £30,000 in Vale.

Mobile Phone Coverage.

As I reported to your annual meeting we now have responses from the four mobile phone providers in Berrick Salome, Roke & Rokemarsh. You will recall I asked if you wanted to set up a working group to keep pressure up and coordinate information which the mobile phone operators said they were required by data protection laws to engage on a one to one private basis. I await your decision on this but if you decide to form a working party I would be very pleased to be part of it.

Meeting time changes.

The full council meetings on Thursday 21 July and Thursday 15 December will start at 6.45pm at Howbery Park, rather than at 6pm as previously stated. This is because the members will hear presentations from various bodies including the Thames valley Police's annual report.

David Turner
SODC Councillor (Chalgrove Ward)
July 7th 2016