

SODC Newsletter – July 2021

Planning

Local Plan 2034/5

The legal challenge by Bioabundance has run its course now, with the Appeal to the High Courts for a Judicial Review being refused. This means that the LP 2034/5 will remain the core planning document for the District Council for the foreseeable future. The Council has indicated that it will join with the Vale of White Horse in writing a Joint Local Plan, which would have two separate entities for the South and The Vale but discussions are at a very early stage.

5 Year Land Supply

The Council has issued its Annual Statement declaring a Land Supply of 5.33 Years. This as at Friday 25th June 2021. You can view the statement here: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/06/South-5YHLS-June-2021.pdf>

Unfortunately, nothing Planning is ever that simple. Last Monday we received a decision to Allow an Appeal at Sonning Common in which the Inspector has allowed an argument that the Council's Land Supply is in fact 4.21 Years; something that we hotly dispute. A review is being carried out and an Application for Judicial Review is likely to follow. Due to the confusion and potential issues that could arise from this, Ian, as Chair of Scrutiny, has called for a report on this matter and for proposals for the way forward.

On the plus side, as Chinnor and Sydenham had their Neighbourhood Plans formally adopted in May, the relative paragraphs in the NPPF, mean that as they are less than two years old, for our plans to remain in effect, we only need a three year land supply. Sadly as Sonning Common had not updated its plan since 2016, these paragraphs could not be engaged.

Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty

As you are already aware, the Government has announced its plans to review the scope of the AONBs which will include our own Chilterns. Whilst detail of these plans is very sketchy a Public Consultation will be announced in the near future. As Lynn is our Board Member on the AONB, and where she can bring information to us, she will.

CoVID-19 Restart Grants

Lynn has continued to successfully support and chase up grants for our local business, which has proven problematic due to the late delivery by Central Government of the tools required for applications.

Letter from Housing Minister

The Minister for Housing, the Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, has written to South Oxfordshire District Council to congratulate the council on its successful bid for funding through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Garden Communities Programme.

After a competitive process, the council has been awarded £125,000 at Didcot Garden Community and £150,000 at Berinsfield Garden community to bring forward housing.

Lynn Lloyd and Ian White – South Oxfordshire District Council