**Building our tomorrow together – join the conversation to help shape the future of our districts**

**You can visit our**[**virtual exhibition**](https://prezi.com/view/YNg8rOShcSyKL5Ewv8wx/)**(if you are on mobile please use the link to the**[**accessible version**](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/02/Exhibition-Boards-accessible-version.pdf)**)**

Requiring sustainable development; protecting and enhancing our countryside; setting higher energy efficiency standards for new buildings; and prioritising more sustainable transport options – these are all benefits planned for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, and everyone is being invited to join the conversation.

Innovative draft policies to address local challenges and unlock future opportunities across the two districts have been published for community feedback, as part of the councils’ work to deliver their Joint Local Plan 2041.

**The six-week consultation which launched on 10 January runs until 11.59pm on 26 February 2024 (extended from 21 February). Visit** [**southandvale.gov.uk/JLP**](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP)**to find out more and have your say.**

Among many topics the Joint Local Plan covers are some updated, new and innovative approaches such as:

* More of the housing built in the districts to be affordable housing to help those struggling to get on the property ladder.
* Setting ambitious targets, beyond the national standards, to ensure developments positively contribute to the local environment and wildlife, and deliver on climate action.
* New policies to identify and enhance our most tranquil places, and protect our dark skies by minimising light pollution for both residents and wildlife.

The two councils are working together to deliver the Joint Local Plan, which will set out what development should be allowed and where, help guide decision-making for planning applications, and set standards for environmental protection, sustainability, water quality and much more, for the years until 2041.

[**Using the interactive online hub**](https://jlp.southandvale.gov.uk/), users can navigate through the Joint Local Plan topics that matter most to them; view proposed approaches, draft policies and supporting evidence documents, and explore interactive maps to see site allocations, where policies apply and more.

There are two ways for people to [**share their feedback online**](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP) depending on how much detail they want to get into:

1. The **Joint Local Plan in a Nutshell survey** features short summaries of the councils’ proposed options across key topics to help make it quick and easy to take part.
2. There’s also a **Preferred Options document survey** for those wanting to comment on specific policy areas and delve into the details of the draft policies to provide a more in-depth response.

The councils have been out and about across the districts during January and February, with a host of local events.

There are paper copies of consultation documents around the districts’ libraries, as well as at Abbey House, Abingdon, the Beacon, Wantage, and Cornerstone Arts Centre and Great Western Park District Neighbourhood Community Centre in Didcot, giving residents less comfortable with the internet the chance to take part as well.

**Find out more on the** [**consultation webpage**](http://www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP)

We really look forward to hearing your views and do share the consultation with your friends, family, and neighbours to spread the word and get as many voices as possible to join the conversation.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Grant Fund**

South Oxfordshire District Council will soon be launching a new grant scheme called the **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Grant Fund**. Town and parish councils and not for profit community groups and organisations will be able to bid for between £75,000 to £250,000 for a wide range of infrastructure to support existing or planned future growth in the district.

The council collects CIL funding from liable developments in order to deliver the infrastructure required to support growth in the district. Through this pilot scheme, we’re helping to fund local organisations to deliver infrastructure for their community required as a direct result of development.

**Eligibility:**

You can find more information about the [Grant Fund and view the full eligibility criteria online](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/community-infrastructure-levy-cil-grant-fund-further-information/), a few points to note:

* The fund is available to town and parish councils and not for profit community groups and organisations only.
* Proposed projects need to have a genuine focus on providing the infrastructure needed as a result of development and must be delivered in the South Oxfordshire District Council area.
* Proposed projects must adhere to the CIL spending requirements as set out in the regulations – the fund may only be used to support the actual delivery of physical infrastructure. It can be new infrastructure or improve or expand the reach of existing infrastructure. It is not able to cover costs for scoping or pre-planning of projects.
* We will prioritise projects that support our corporate priorities and other key criteria to ensure deliverability, sustainability, inclusivity and consideration towards the climate and ecological impacts.

**How to apply:**

You’ll soon be able to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) from **week commencing** **19 February 2024.** The EOI stage will be open for six weeks and you can view the [guidance materials](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/community-infrastructure-levy-cil-grant-fund-further-information/) now to help prepare. We will be in touch again once submissions open. Following the EOI process, applicants whose projects meet the funding requirements will be invited to submit a full application.

If you have any questions, please send them to [infrastructureobligations@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:infrastructureobligations@southandvale.gov.uk).

**Supporting awareness in 2024**

We’ve published the calendar of national and local awareness events that the council will mark in the coming year. From Race Equality Week to Stress Awareness Month to the Great British Spring Clean, all the events and awareness days that we support are listed on our webpages:

* [Southoxon.gov.uk/diversitycalendar](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=5ffb9a3526&e=c7f7511c41)

**New classes at Cornerstone**

And that’s not all that’s new at Cornerstone for 2024, the centre has launched its spring season of classes promising ‘something for everyone’. These range from the adult art class Art Buffet to the children’s Youth Theatre classes and Street Dance. There are taster sessions so you can try before you buy. More information is available [on the Cornerstone website](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=fa6da37201&e=c7f7511c41)

**GLL Sports Foundation Support**

Local talented athletes in need of support with their sport can now apply to the [GLL Sport Foundation](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=5c22ab81b2&e=c7f7511c41).

The foundation supports local athletes with access to sport facilities, physiotherapy, lifestyle mentoring, mental health aid and financial aid. **Applications close on the 20 February 2024**.

**February half term activities in South Oxfordshire**

Multi-sports, yoga, boxercise and a massive magic show are just some of the many free and low-cost activities and events available for children and their families to enjoy this February half-term at venues across South Oxfordshire.

The activities are expected to be very popular so please book now to avoid disappointment. Visit our website to see [what’s on and how to book.](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=dc8f9f74f4&e=c7f7511c41)

**Local Leisure Centre Activities**

Keep the children entertained this half term with roller skating in Faringdon and Family Fun Swimming sessions at Didcot Wave, and short course swimming lessons in Wantage. There’s more information on Better Leisure Centre’s Facebook sites and [Better UK website.](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=7472a362c3&e=c7f7511c41)

**Have some fun at Cornerstone this February**

February has some great shows coming up at Cornerstone with something for everyone to enjoy. To book tickets and learn more visit the [Cornerstone website.](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=8991529e9e&e=c7f7511c41)

**Successful recycling districts urge residents to reduce and reuse before recycling**

Residents in South Oxfordshire are officially the best recyclers in the country, with residents in the Vale of White Horse a close third, according to a government league table published yesterday.

However, both districts are now encouraging residents to further boost this good work by turning their efforts to reducing and reusing where possible.

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) officially published the [**recycling performance league table**](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results-202223) yesterday (Wednesday 31 January). South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils were placed in the top three of the recycling tables for English local authorities. South Oxfordshire had been ranked the highest for household waste recycling rates in 2022/23 at 61.6% and Vale of White Horse in third place with 60.9%. Each council has been in the top 5 for the last five years.

Alongside the high performing collection rates for both councils, locally, a recent waste satisfaction survey has yielded encouraging results for the councils’ household waste collections, indicating a high level of resident approval with this side of the service. An impressive 82% of respondents expressed satisfaction, or high satisfaction, with the overall quality of the waste and recycling services provided.

**South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have adopted a new joint Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the districts over the next four years.**

The previous AQAP had been in place for around nine years and was reviewed to ensure that the current pollutant levels are considered and that the right actions to tackle them are in place.

While the majority of areas across both districts have very good local air quality, there are a small number of hotspot areas, Air Quality Management Areas( AQMA’s), that continue to need specific monitoring. The new AQAP will focus on these to address poor local air quality.

The good news is that, in the last five years, most places in the districts have seen a consistent reduction in nitrogen dioxide, a key pollutant primarily linked to emissions from combustion engine vehicles.  This means that some of our Air Quality Management Areas, have improved enough that this status may be removed in due course.

This improvement can be attributed to several factors including:

* The work of previous Air Quality Action Plans.
* A change in behaviour with more people working from home.
* The use of cleaner vehicles such as electric vehicles (EVs).

The new plan looks to build on the successful reduction in the volume of nitrogen dioxide. To achieve this, the plan aims to reduce traffic emissions by promoting healthier and cheaper options for short journeys, such as walking and cycling.  Where vehicles are needed the councils will promote the increased use of public transport and low emission vehicles such as EVs.

Councillor Sue Cooper, South Oxfordshire District Council Cabinet Member for the Environment, said: “It’s good news that there has been a consistent reduction in one of the key pollutants (nitrogen dioxide) which is detrimental to the health of some of our vulnerable residents.  We want to continue reducing air pollution with our new Air Quality Action Plan and we hope our residents will support our actions.”

Councillor Mark Coleman, Vale of White Horse District Council Cabinet member for environmental services and waste, said: “The new Air Quality Action Plan identifies those responsible for delivering the actions. Specifically, those that sit with the district councils and those that sit with our key air quality partners, Oxfordshire County Council and National Highways. This is a great example of partnership working, which is essential to improve local air quality.”

The joint Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for 2024-2028 was approved by DEFRA in Dec.2023, and formally adopted at both councils’ licensing committee meetings which took place last week.

\*The current AQMAs are:

Vale – Abingdon, Botley, Marcham

South – Henley, Wallingford, Watlington

To see the AQAP please visit our air quality management pages ([**South**](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/air-quality-2/air-quality/)/[**Vale**](https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/environment-and-neighbourhood-issues/air-quality/air-quality/)). For details of the licensing committee reports please see the relevant pages on our websites  ([**South**](https://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=3407)/[**Vale**](https://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=459&MId=3259)).

Residents can also visit [**www.oxonair.uk**](http://www.oxonair.uk/) – a new, Defra funded, website created in partnership between Oxford City, Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and Oxfordshire County Council, which provides up to date air quality guidance and resources for all of Oxfordshire.

[**Booking link**](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/TownandParishPlanningbookings@capitacouncilspartnership.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/) **for planning surgeries for town and parish councils**

**Corporate Plan Performance Report –** [**Second Quarter**](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/12/23-24-Q2-South-CP-performance-report-v2-1.pdf)

**Climate Action Plan Performance Report –** [**Second Quarter**](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/23-24-Q2-CAP-South-performance-report-v2.pdf)

**Cllr Ali Gordon-Creed**

Green Councillor for Chinnor Ward (South Oxfordshire)

**Cllr Ed Sadler**

Liberal Democrat Councillor for Chinnor Ward (South Oxfordshire)