**SODC A Conservative District Councillor's View**

**(Or What The Council Is Doing)**

***October 2018.***

**Ward Specific**

We continue to deal with a significant number of resident enquiries and issues regarding building matters, the regulations and requirements and the on-going issues around developer applications and appeals. For Chinnor we continue to work with our officers at SODC to review and strengthen the cases with regard to the three Public Enquiries; for Perssimon and Cala Homes, together with the written Appeals. We are also working up the case for the Doveleat Appeal.

We know that with the Appeals due to resume next week, you will be interested to hear that SODC has a changed position regarding the land supply.

Whilst we don't think that there will be a formal announcement until the appeals resume, we are able to tell you that following on from the Minister of State's Written Ministerial Statement regarding the Growth Deal, for the next few years, we only have to maintain a three-year land supply. Of course, we need to maintain planned momentum to ensure that we meet the five-year requirement when this concession ends.

The new NPPF sets out the required method for calculating the land supply and housing needs. As you might expect, the legal eagles are already working to reinterpret this in any way that helps their argument, but as it stands, it helps our position as, on the basis of the NPPFs calculation, our land supply is calculated at over 7 years. More exact figures will be argued over at the Appeal!

Following on from the Inspector’s Decision to up-hold the Appeal in respect of the application for 7 houses on Lower Icknield Way, Ian has written to the Minister of State expressing our concerns that the Inspector has not appreciated all aspects of the case, and we have asked that it be Called In for review, including John Howell in the circulation. Chinnor Parish Council has also written to the Minister supporting this request.

 We are also working on Written Submissions for Appeals at Aston Rowant. Where requested, we continue to provide support and guidance to Parish Councils for Planning Committee submissions.

Ian continues to attend three Planning Committee Meetings per month. He also has meetings of Scrutiny, and Licencing Panels to attend and co-Chaired the Audit and Governance Meeting at the end of September at which the Auditor’s statement on the Council’s finances was reviewed and attends Cabinet Meetings where possible.

Lynn as a member of the Cabinet continues working on the normal day-to-day portfolio work including work with Cornerstone, our leisure centres, the Go Active and Go Active Junior initiatives and Grant activities. Lynn also continues to work with our Parishes in respect of the work on Neighbourhood Plans.

We have other on-going work, but this covers some of the main areas for this month.

**Planning**

**As a separate Planning Newsletter will be issued over the next few days ago, I am only including a few, more recent items.**

**Response to letter from Minister of State for Housing**

You may have seen media coverage of our letters from both South and Vale Leaders who sent their responses to providing proposals on housing growth in our districts to support the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Corridor.

You can download a copy of the minister's letter here.

https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=61&o=9492&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Fd45tutfcig1ztdm%2F2018-08-09%2520New%2520Settlements%2520letter%2520to%2520leaders%2520from%2520Kit%2520Malthouse%2520MP.pdf%3Fdl%3D0&a=0

For South, the letter from Cllr Jane Murphy can be found here

https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=61&o=9492&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Fcikez8v117iicca%2F2018-08-15%2520Jane%2520Murphy%2520letter%2520to%2520Kit%2520Malthouse%2520MP\_0.pdf%3Fdl%3D0&a=0

and her summary statement released here.

https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=61&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.southoxon.gov.uk%2Fnews%2F2018%2F2018-08%2Fleader-statement-response-letter-minister-state-housing&a=0

**Three-year housing land supply**

Following a consultation in July, councils in Oxfordshire now only need to provide a three-year supply of land for housing, instead of the five-year supply normally required by the government.

The government has agreed to this change while we work together with the other Oxfordshire Councils on a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan, the document that will address how we collectively plan to deliver 100,000 homes across the county by 2031, which was agreed as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.

This means it is now much less likely for developers to win planning permission on appeal after we have rejected their applications.

**Neighbourhood Plan updates**

Benson and Watlington plans were adopted by council on 23 August.

There was a public hearing as part of the examination of the Cholsey plan on Monday 17 September at The Pavillion in Cholsey.

The Long Wittenham neighbourhood plan pre-submission consultation concluded on Tuesday 11 September.

The examinations of the Chalgrove and Goring neighbourhood plans were expected to conclude in mid-September.

The Baldons and Warborough & Shillingford plans will be subject to public referendums on Thursday 4 October.

The Pyrton plan will be examined by Mr Timothy Jones, of No5 Chambers.

**Capital Grants applications open soon**

Our Capital Grants scheme opens on Monday 1 October and we are encouraging any groups with a project which could benefit from this funding to get in touch with our Grants Team before they start an application.

There’s £145,000 available to help fund a variety of facilities and improvements, such as upgrading a community hall or improving a play area. For more information see our grants pages.

**New legislation coming for HMOs**

New legislation comes in on 1 October, which affects landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

As licensing authorities, both South and Vale grant licences to larger HMOs that are three or more storeys and occupied by five or more people forming at least two separate households.

From 1 October, the legislation changes so that smaller properties used as HMOs will also require a licence. Other changes to be introduced include national minimum sizes for rooms used as sleeping accommodation and the requirement for landlords to adhere to council refuse schemes.

You can find more information on our South and Vale website

https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=61&o=9492&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.southoxon.gov.uk%2Fservices-and-advice%2Fhousing%2Fhelp-landlords%2Fmandatory-licensing&a=0

If you have any information on HMOs in your area that may require a licence, please email our Environmental Health Team env.health@southandvale.gov.uk or by phoning 01235 422403.

**It’s a yellow letter day in South and Vale as residents are urged to confirm their details**

More than 87,000 properties have responded to our ‘Household Enquiry’ letter which required people to confirm who currently lives in their property. However, we’re yet to hear from 34,000 homes so we are sending reminder letters to those properties.

We need this information to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so in future elections.

If people get a reminder letter, or if they can find the original letter, they should visit householdresponse.com/southandvale to confirm their details are correct or, if not, provide the correct information.

If a household hasn’t confirmed their details by 7 October they could receive a visit from one of our officers to confirm the details.

**£1.2million recovered**

During 2017/18 we recovered more than £1.2million in council tax arrears. This was thanks to tough enforcement action we took against non-payers.

We issued 5,000 court summonses to people who had repeatedly failed or refused to pay their council tax.

Magistrates then granted liability orders against almost 4,000 of those individuals meaning we could take enforcement action, including the use of bailiffs, to retrieve the money. We of course offer support to those who are genuinely struggling to pay.

**Letter to minister on Affordable Housing**

You'll remember a motion carried at Council last month that requested that Cllr Jane Murphy sent a letter to the Minister of Housing about the definition of Affordable Housing. Cllr Murphy sent the letter last month and you can read it here.

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**Mountain Warehouse comes to Didcot**

Outdoor retailer Mountain Warehouse have opened a new store in the Orchard Centre.

Perfectly located on the doorstep of the Chilterns, Ridgeway and Wittenham Clumps, the retailers offer a wide range of clothing and equipment for activities outdoors.

You can read the joint press release from Hammerson on our website here.

**New service to help victims and witnesses to report hate crime - Reminder**

Victims and witnesses of hate crime who are not comfortable talking to the police now have an alternative place to go to report incidents in confidence.

Hate crimes can be reported to specially trained staff at familiar locations across South and Vale, including at Citizens’ Advice Bureaus. Incidents can be reported in person or by telephone.

Staff will be available to talk about the incident and can offer to report it to the police on their behalf. They will also refer people to Victims First, a service dedicated to ensuring that victims or witnesses receive the support they need to cope with and recover from their experience.

To find out where your nearest reporting centre is visit southoxon.gov.uk/hatecrime.

**Recycling**

**Recycling roadshows came to a town near you**

Recycling experts from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have been out and about myth-busting over what can and can’t be recycled in the districts as part of National Recycle Week 2018.

Events were planned across southern Oxfordshire and gave residents the chance to ask the experts about recycling collections and what happens to the recycling after waste crews have collected it.

The district councils’ officers were at special recycling stalls, giving out advice and recycling goodies.

It was the 15th Recycle Week (24 – 30 September) organised by WRAP\* as part of the Recycle Now national recycling campaign for England. This year’s theme is ‘Recycling. We do. Because it matters.’ with an emphasis on plastic items.

Cllr Caroline Newton, South Oxfordshire District Council’s Cabinet Member for waste and recycling, said: “Up to 80 per cent of household waste can be recycled and the councils offer lots of recycling information online, including our Binzone app which gives details of collections and of individual items which can be recycled. Recycle Week was a good opportunity to remind residents of the benefits of recycling and how the council can help people do even more to reduce waste.”

More information about waste and recycling can be found on the councils' recycling pages

People can also download the Binzone app to smartphones or tablets which will tell what can and can’t be recycled and also when bins are due to be collected.

\*WRAP – Waste and Resources Action Programme is a registered charity set up to promote sustainable waste management

**Cooking oil recycling**

We've just introduced a new cooking oil recycling service for residents as part of our food waste collections.

After cooking and once it has cooled, any leftover oil can be poured into a plastic bottle no bigger than one litre in size. The bottle and its contents can then be placed into the kerbside food waste caddy, along with other food waste, and put out for the weekly collection. For those who don't want to use a plastic bottle, oil can also be poured straight into the caddy along with other food waste.

One litre of cooking oil can generate enough electricity to make 240 cups of tea!

**Gambling policy review**

We are currently reviewing our joint gambling act policy which is due for renewal in January 2019. The policy sets out how we manage gambling premises and permits across South and Vale.

We are proposing just three minor changes to the policy and people now have until until midnight on Monday 8 October to comment on the updated document at

https://ebtk.co.uk/resources/stats/click.php?c=2636&e=64&o=9492&url=https%3A%2F%2Fsurvey.southandvale.gov.uk%2Fs%2Fgambling%2F&a=0

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