

SODC Newsletter – October 2021

Planning

We continue to work with residents who have concerns regarding Planning Applications, and we are working on responses to a number of appeals.

5 Year Land Supply

The Council issued its Annual Statement declaring a Land Supply of 5.33 Years and this remains the Council's stated position. 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>

As informed last month 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. We have now received the result of an Appeal in Didcot in which a different Inspector argues that our Land Supply is 4.81 years. Ian has asked that this Appeal is considered in the Review he asked for Scrutiny as well, but the result of this will be 'delayed' until the results of the Judicial Review of the Sonning Common case are known as to publish before that would be premature and possibly compromise the Council's arguments.

Garden Waste Service

Councillors and residents will be aware that the Garden Waste Collection Service was suspended earlier this year. In view of the continuing situation, with no end in sight, and the scarcity of information being communicated by the Administration, the Conservative Group requested a Review of the position to be brought forward to an Emergency Full Council.

In view of the importance of the matter, Ian agreed, as Chair of Scrutiny, that this should urgently be brought to the Joint Scrutiny Committee (as it is a shared Service with Vale of White Horse Council) as well.

Members will be aware that Cabinet Member David Rouane, in who's Portfolio this matter falls, announced the day before the Emergency Full Council, that the Service would temporarily resume in a much reduced form from early October and that an extra 3 months' would be added to the term of the current agreement with residents.

Whilst we welcome this, and understand that the situation with the shortage of lorry drivers is the main contributor, although the evidence from the Road Hauliers' Asscn shows that this is a Europe wide issue, the Administration blames this largely on Brexit. This has no bearing on the issue that it has been poor at keeping residents properly informed and slow in reacting to the changing situation. This was acknowledged by Cllr Rouane, and it is to be hoped that the lessons learned will inform future behaviour.

The Council has now written to all residents affected by this issue to inform them of the present situation and the temporary measures introduced to relieve the situation

We will continue to maintain pressure on the Administration through both Scrutiny and Full Council for a permanent resolution.

Fly Tipping

To date there does not appear to have been a significant increase in fly-tipping as a result of the Garden Waste issue, with the issue seemingly involving a small number of rogue builders and house clearance operatives.

We do continue to monitor this situation and keep pressure on our contractor to maintain clearance time scales where instances have been reported.

Waste Collection In Church Lane

Last month we up-dated you with regard to the steps that were being taken in Church Lane, Chinnor, in respect of the non-collection of waste. This being due to parking in the lane making it impossible for the waste collection vehicles to safely drive up the road. Following on from the Site Meeting that she convened, Lynn continues to work with our county Councillor colleagues and officers from the waste management and Highways teams to seek a resolution to this issue. There is no easy and quick fix to this issue. It has to be acknowledged that since planning permission was given for the 'new houses' the size of modern cars, especially SUVs, has increased significantly and the number of vehicles being parked on the street has increased significantly; this also has an impact further up the lane albeit that the width of the carriageway there has not been set by planning reviews.

The number of options being considered, which includes possible parking restrictions in the Lane, has been reduced and progress is being made towards a solution but this still remains some way off, but we will keep you informed of developments.

Councillor Capital Grants

The first window for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme closed on the 1st October and we are waiting to be informed of the level of applications. If we still have funds available, a second window will be opened at the beginning of November for applications for these remaining funds,

Full details of the scheme can be found here: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/councillor-community-grants/>.

Sewage overflow and loading

We have been becoming more and more concerned about the issue of sewage and issues with it's safe disposal by Thames Water, and as Chair of Scrutiny, Ian is looking to instigate a review of the issue. Detailed files have been provided of issues in Chinnor by Cllrs Williams and Ashdown, which will allow us to determine the best approach and we will keep you informed as matters progress, although, given all of the parties involved and the complexity of the issue, it is to be expected that this will be a protracted review but we will keep you informed.

Leader of the Council

Sue Cooper, present Leader of the Council, has announced that she will stand down as Leader from this Thursday's Full Council, (the 7th October, and we expect that David Ruane will be elected as the new Leader.)

You will have received information about other Council matters through the releases from our Communications Team and as ever, if you have questions about this, please do let us know.

All the best.

Lynn Lloyd and Ian White – South Oxfordshire District Council