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| **Title** | District Councillors’ Report |
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| **Parish** | Warborough Parish Council |
| **Date**  | **2nd** October 2024 |

**Draft Joint Local Plan**

Council approved the Regulation 19 publication version of the new Joint Local Plan on 19th September, so we are on target to submit it for inspection in December, taking advantage of the transitional arrangements announced by the Government. From 1st October the draft JLP will be available for comment for a period of 6 weeks, enabling stakeholders to give feedback and to comment on whether or not the JLP meets all the relevant requirements. Any comments will be submitted along with the draft JLP to the inspector, although this stage of the process is a highly technical one and is not inviting any new policies or significant changes to the proposed ones.

More information can be found here: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning/the-next-steps-for-councils-joint-local-plan/>

The Policy team has also responded to the Government’s consultation on the new NPPF – You can view the councils’ response here: [South response](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=51526c8a98&e=695539377e)

The main thrust of our response is that we believe local planning authorities are best placed to determine local housing need and that top-down targets are not the right approach. We are also concerned that the progressive and ambitious policies set out in our draft JLP should not be hampered by the drive to build 1.5m houses.

Interestingly, Oxford City Council has been instructed to withdraw its draft Local Plan from examination as the inspector found that they had not demonstrated meaningful dialogue and cooperation with its neighbouring planning authorities.

**Grants**

**Homes for Ukraine Grant Scheme**

Community organisations are now able to apply for The Homes for Ukraine Grant Scheme with grants ranging from £250 to £2,000. This grant scheme is designed to help fund projects or services that support the successful integration and settlement of Homes for Ukraine guests into their new communities across the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire.

The scheme opened for applications on 16 September. The grant scheme is being administered in partnership with Cherwell District Council. You can download the application form [from the SODC website](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=28449219d7&e=695539377e) alongside this [guidance document](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=325ea5b161&e=695539377e).

**Decarbonisation Grant funding**

We have secured government funding for grants for local businesses and organisations – including charities - to help them lower their carbon emissions. They can get grants between £1,000 and £10,000 for a variety of decarbonisation projects including replacing gas or oil boilers with air-source heat pumps, smart energy devices, electric vehicles, e-bikes, bicycle courier equipment, solar panels, and new or enhanced green infrastructure at their premises.  **Applications must be in by 7 October**. Please help us spread the word -  [Full details of the grant scheme and documents needed is available here.](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=35c0aed829&e=695539377e)

**Council Finances**

It’s that time of the year again when we start the process of setting the Council’s budget for the next final year and beyond. We are also now reviewing the results of the 2023/24 budget to see how accurate our projections were and how we used public money to deliver a very wide range of services. Scrutiny Committee will be reviewing these figures on Tuesday 1st October, so a verbal update can be given at the meeting on Thursday.

One familiar outcome is that many capital projects and their budgets slip from one year into the next, so I will be asking for more information about why this happens and what can be done to ensure that projects move forward in a timely manner.

Of course, we don’t yet know what the new Government will do when it comes to agreeing a financial settlement with local government. We are hoping for an end to the hand-to-mouth approach taken by the previous Conservative Government and a steady reversal in the swingeing cuts which local authorities have experienced for the past 14 years. Crucially, Councils need to be able to plan ahead, so multi-year settlements are essential as is the removal of the wasteful system of competitive bidding for grants, which often come with strings attached and many unhelpful conditions.

**Climate Action**

Everyone is invited to the Didcot Eco Fair at [Cornerstone](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=f7eebbbee0&e=695539377e) on Saturday 2 November from 11am to 3pm when we will be celebrating all things green and showcasing our districts’ fantastic sustainable businesses, with a clothing swap, great ideas on how to avoid food waste and advice on how to save energy.

Didcot Garden Town, in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and Sustainable Didcot, is hosting the free family-friendly event. Centre stage will be the Eco Marketplace with a variety of eco-friendly stalls specialising in handmade products, clothing, food and drink.

Please help to spread the word!

**Meet your MP to Talk about Climate and Nature Saturday 12th October**

As part of the National Day of Action on Climate Change there is an opportunity to raise your concerns with our Mp Freddie Van Mierlo 10.00-13.00 Benson Parish Hall. Until May this year Freddie was the cabinet member for Climate Change and Nature Recovery at SODC

**Home Energy Upgrade Scheme**

Anyone who is struggling and looking for ways to make their home cheaper to heat and more comfortable to live in may be eligible for free energy efficiency upgrades. With the Home Upgrade Grant from Oxfordshire County Council, homes can be installed with a variety of options from insulation to solar panels.

Applications must be made by 31 October 2024. If your household income is less than £39,000 and your energy efficiency rating (EPC) is D or lower, get in touch today to see if you could be eligible for up to £38,000 worth of work on your home. Apply through the [website](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=b7d9168feb&e=695539377e) and help us spread the word.

**New Road (Plough Field)  Planning Appeal**

Application reference: P23/S4082/O

## I note that this is on the Agenda but if anyone would like to read up about appeals in advance there is information about the appeal process and the procedure for taking part in inquiries in the following guide

## : [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-appeals-procedural-guide/f90d5f21-de2c-43cd-b743-6c81b9a1b70f#inquiries](_blank)  We have been advised by the appeals officer at SODC that “any interested parties can apply for Rule 6 status, however given this has already been granted to the parish council I would suggest that the best approach would be for the other interested parties to liaise with the parish council, as the best case could be mounted by third parties collectively rather than multiple groups.” The case officer is not in a position to liaise with individual residents but would prefer queries to be directed through your local councillors, Andrea or Sue.