|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | District Councillors’ Report |
| **Authors** | Cllrs Andrea Powell & Sue Cooper |
| **Parish** | Warborough Parish Council |
| **Date**  | 6th November 2024 |

**Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

Every responsible authority (in our case the County Council) is required by law now to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). SODC is a member of the Local Nature Partnership, to which this responsibility has been delegated, and there have been a number of workshops involving large numbers of stakeholders over the past 9 months or so. The final draft LNRS is now available for public consultation for 6 weeks from 15th October - see [People in Oxfordshire urged to have their say on local nature recovery - South Oxfordshire District Council](https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/climate-emergency/people-in-oxfordshire-urged-to-have-their-say-on-local-nature-recovery/)

**Police & Crime Commissioner Local Crime Survey**

[Public consultation - Thames Valley PCC](https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/survey/?fbclid=IwY2xjawGBvbJleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHcqmbiPSvuNa7-GKx_emHUyemSLkQ2kgU0h1ynkl7Dq9RjPqKSvmUpRS5Q_aem_9Zdu2B_C8oaJrzPGIld6ww)

Matthew Barber is asking Thames Valley residents to share their experiences and have a say in how policing services are shaped in the Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). The information provided (anonymously) will help inform the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on any gaps or improvements that could be made in the future. So if you feel particularly strongly about the need to prioritise certain areas of concern (e.g. domestic violence, antisocial behaviour or road safety), this is your chance to have your say. There doesn’t appear to be a closing date, but it’s an easy survey to complete.

**Planning – The Plough Field appeal**

The Parish Council will be well aware of the latest situation with the appeal, due to be heard in January and February 2025. Now that the Parish Council has secured Rule 6 status, it can liaise with the appeals team at SODC and determine what expert advice and reports are going to be essential to ensuring success (although it’s never guaranteed!). With the current focus on reform of the Planning System, developers are taking the opportunity to submit speculative applications and may be hoping to be more successful at Appeal. (We have just seen a speculative application for 40 units on a site in Benson that has only recently had an application for 17 rejected on appeal). While SODC will always robustly defend its development plan, its housing land supply situation and its planning decisions, a strong representation from the local community (typically via the Parish Council) is becoming the norm. Other Parish Councils are now including contingency funds in their 2025/26 budgets to cover specialist advice and consultants when previously they might have tried to represent themselves at hearings.

**Planning – Neighbourhood Plans**

Council recently “made” four new Neighbourhood Plans in the District, making South Oxfordshire one of the top (if not the top) district for NPs in England. Our response to the NPPF consultation has included strong support for NPs, which allow local people to determine where housing should be built in their communities. There is no indication that NPs will be downgraded in the new structure and it is important that the W&S revision moves forward promptly in order to provide additional protection against the unwanted and unallocated Plough Field application. The recent NP event on 30th October was very impressive and will help to evidence the new and revised policies as well as the community engagement required.

**Waste Projects**

Our first waste electric vehicle (EV) has been delivered. Drivers are undergoing

training, and final checks and paperwork being completed before it begins

collecting food waste.

The trial full sized electric Refuse Collection Vehicle funded by Innovate has

also arrived. It is also undergoing final checks before beginning the trial period.

The new waste strategy, which was formally approved by Cabinet last month (see below), puts a strong emphasis on encouraging and enabling people to reduce, reuse, repair, refill and rehome items - instead of throwing them away. Everyone can read the strategy and find out more about rethinking waste and our plans to keep our streets clean and tidy at: [www.southandvale.gov.uk/rethinkingwaste](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=1eacea7113&e=695539377e).

**SODC Cabinet and Council News**

Cabinet has met twice in recent weeks to consider two of our most significant service contracts, one for car park management and the other for waste collection and street cleansing. While some details of these contracts are commercially confidential, the papers detailing the issues to be considered and the options available (both contracts are held jointly with Vale of White Horse council) can be found on the SODC calendar of meetings page - [Monthly meetings calendar - October 2024](https://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1)

Remember that all Cabinet meetings can be viewed live or after the event through YouTube – the link is on the meeting page.

The Cabinet also recently received the annual performance report for 2023/24 which summarises progress made against the Corporate Plan objectives. We are pleased to report that none of the projects listed was given a “red” rating, with nearly all actions either complete or progressing according to plan. The annual and quarterly reports can all be found online at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/corporateplan](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/corporateplan). Work to create the next four-year strategic plan is well under way (it was postponed slightly due to the need to focus on the JLP) and will be ready for adoption early in 2025, in line with the next budget.

Council met on 24th October to “make” the four new Neighbourhood Plans mentioned above, the review the Treasury Management outturn for the last financial year and to debate motions relating to Thames Water, Local Government financing, Net Zero targets and protecting Pubs as assets of community value. All four motions were passed, mostly unanimously. All details can be found on the Calendar page listed above.

**Community Grants**

The deadline for our Councillor Community Grant Scheme is fast approaching. Community organisations, including town and parish councils have until **Friday 29 November** to apply for funding of up to £5,000 from each South Oxfordshire District Councillor. The Silver Swans bid for portable barre equipment has already been approved, but if there are any other projects within the parish that you think would benefit from funding, do let us know!

You can find the details on our website [southoxon.gov.uk/grants](https://southandvale.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=33bec1cf8b5523ad47c7183a0&id=61b09ef0c1&e=695539377e) and organisations can also contact our Community Enablement team if they have any questions grants@southandvale.gov.uk.