

**District Councillor's Report 8 July 2019**  
**Jo Robb, Lorraine Hillier**

**Local Plan**

The Local Plan continues to dominate discussion at the Council, and several meetings have been held with Officers to discuss the way in which the emerging plan has evolved and the data upon which it was based. Officers have produced a briefing paper containing four possible options, which are explained in full along with the benefits, drawbacks and risks of each; this report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee and was published on the council's website on 18 June.

- 1) Option one – make no changes to the plan and allow it to continue to be examined by the government's independent inspectors.
- 2) Option two – allow the plan to continue to be examined by the government's inspectors but recommend a series of main modifications that will be considered by the inspectors.
- 3) Option three – withdraw the plan, revise it, and then resubmit the revised plan following an additional public consultation.
- 4) Option four - withdraw the plan and start the whole plan-making process from the beginning.

Council officers have recommended councillors choose Option One. The Scrutiny Committee in June adjourned and requested more time to receive and consider additional information at their subsequent meeting on 2nd July. At this meeting, scrutiny voted down two separate motions to recommend Options 1 and 2 and instead voted in favour of recommending Option 3.

Cabinet met today (Monday 8th July) and will meet again on Wednesday 10th July to consider all available information received to date, any outputs from Scrutiny plus further input from Oxfordshire County Council. This intensive information-gathering period is designed to ensure that any decision taken by Full Council on 18th July is properly researched and that the implications of any decision are clearly understood.

**Finances**

Council is looking to strengthen SODC's finances, seeking innovative ways to increase revenue and manage costs effectively without continuing to dip into SODC reserves to fund the operating budget. Budgeting starts in September.

**New SODC Website on its way**

The new SODC website is under development and should be a vast improvement on the current one. The aim is to make the website more modern and user-friendly. The timetable for go-live is not yet known but we will let you know as soon as I hear.

## **Recycling and Waste**

South Oxfordshire was recently ranked in a DEFRA survey as the top recycling district in the South East of England, and third nationally, recycling 63% of its waste.

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's recent programme exposing the export of recycling waste to Malaysia has rightly concerned both residents and Councillors. Liz Hayden, SODC's head of housing and environment, tells us that by weight, around 90% by of the waste plastics Biffa trades from their sorting and transfer facilities, is sent to companies in the UK, including for reprocessing into secondary raw materials. Around 10% (mainly comprising LDPE film like bread bags) is exported, predominantly to reprocessors in the EU.

Low grade "C grade" film like plastic carrier bags, which makes up 2-3% of plastic waste by weight is considered at greatest risk of not being properly recycled if exported and is therefore sent to energy recovery in the UK.

Residents can find out full details of the destinations of waste collected in our district by visiting [www.wastedataflow.org.uk](http://www.wastedataflow.org.uk). Anybody can register for public access and run reports on the waste and recycling figures reported by all local authorities in the UK.

Separately, if residents do experience any problems with their bins not being collected by Biffa, to whom the Council outsources rubbish collection, they need to report this online by visiting [southoxon.gov.uk/missed bins](http://southoxon.gov.uk/missed-bins) before midnight on the next working day after the collection was due, or by calling 03000 610610 before 5pm on the next working day.

## **Planning Training for Town and Parish Councils**

In September, Planning are running training events for town and parish councils. The sessions for SODC are as follows:

Tuesday 17 September at Cornerstone, Didcot

2pm-4pm OR 4pm-6pm

Please contact Emily Hamerton if you would like further details. 07717 255 179

## **Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy**

The Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) outlines how Oxfordshire businesses working in the science and technology sectors. It includes the ambitious vision of making Oxfordshire one of the top three innovation centres by 2040. There is potential funding for small businesses to overcome the challenges to growth – funding to deliver quality digital infrastructure and 5G broadband coverage, better quality and better located employment spaces and education and training opportunities for residents. More to come on this.

Do let us know if you have any questions of if we can be of any help.

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