

Title	District Councillors' Report
Councillors	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson & Cllr Ben Manning
Parish	Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Parish Council
Date	17 January 2024

Building our tomorrow together – join the conversation to help shape the future of our districts

Download our Promotional Poster [here](#)

Requiring sustainable development; protecting and enhancing our countryside; setting higher energy efficiency standards for new buildings; and prioritising more sustainable transport options – these are all benefits planned for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, and everyone is being invited to join the conversation.

Innovative draft policies to address local challenges and unlock future opportunities across the two districts have been published for community feedback, as part of the councils' work to deliver their Joint Local Plan 2041.

The six-week consultation launches today 10 January and will run until 11.59pm on 21 February 2024. Visit southandvale.gov.uk/JLP to find out more and have your say.

Among many topics the Joint Local Plan covers are some updated, new and innovative approaches such as:

- More of the housing built in the districts to be affordable housing to help those struggling to get on the property ladder.
- Setting ambitious targets, beyond the national standards, to ensure developments positively contribute to the local environment and wildlife, and deliver on climate action.
- New policies to identify and enhance our most tranquil places, and protect our dark skies by minimising light pollution for both residents and wildlife.

The two councils are working together to deliver the Joint Local Plan, which will set out what development should be allowed and where, help guide decision-making for planning applications, and set standards for environmental protection, sustainability, water quality and much more, for the years until 2041.

The Joint Local Plan is one of the most important documents we deliver as a council and has a lasting impact on our community. That's why we need everyone across the districts to join the conversation and actively participate in this process to help shape our future. We had a great response to our first Joint Local Plan consultation, so we are excited to share our proposed approaches with the community, highlight how your previous feedback has shaped our work, and showcase our plans to benefit our community, economy, and environment. We really welcome comments on what our Joint Local Plan to 2041 should contain.

[Using the interactive online hub](#), users can navigate through the Joint Local Plan topics that matter most to them; view proposed approaches, draft policies and supporting evidence documents, and explore interactive maps to see site allocations, where policies apply and more.

There are two ways for people to [share their feedback online](#) depending on how much detail they want to get into:

1. The Joint Local Plan in a Nutshell survey features short summaries of the councils' proposed options across key topics to help make it quick and easy to take part.
2. There's also a Preferred Options document survey for those wanting to comment on specific policy areas and delve into the details of the draft policies to provide a more in-depth response.

The councils will also be out and about across the districts during January and February, with a host of local events. People can come and find out more about the plan, chat with council officers and members, ask questions and find out how to give feedback.

There will also be paper copies of consultation documents around the districts' libraries, as well as at Abbey House, Abingdon, the Beacon, Wantage, and Cornerstone Arts Centre and Great Western Park District Neighbourhood Community Centre in Didcot, giving residents less comfortable with the internet the chance to take part as well.

Drop in to one of our in-person events to chat with us, ask questions and join the conversation. Find out more on the [consultation webpage](#):

Location	Date	Time	Venue
Sandford-on-Thames	Saturday 20 January	1pm – 4pm	Sandford Village Hall, Henley Road, OX4 4YN
Shippon	Wednesday 24 January	3pm – 8pm	Shippon Village Hall, Barrow Road, opposite Prince of Wales pub, OX13 6JQ
Wallingford	Thursday 25 January	3pm – 8pm	Centre 70, Wallingford Community Association Hall, off Kinecroft, Goldsmiths Lane, OX10 0DT
Henley-on-Thames	Saturday 27 January	11am – 4pm	Henley Town Hall, Market Place, Henley RG9 2AG
Thame	Tuesday 30 January	11am – 4pm	Candelo Lounge, 102 High St, Thame, OX9 3DU
Wantage	Wednesday 31 January	11am – 4pm	The Beacon, Community Centre, Portway, Wantage OX12 9BX
Abingdon	Saturday 3 February	11am – 4pm	Pablo Lounge, Abbey Shopping Centre, 1-3 Bury Street, Abingdon, OX14 3QY
Crowmarsh Gifford	Monday 5 February	11am – 4pm	Crowmarsh Village Hall, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, OX10 8ED
Faringdon	Tuesday 6 February	11am – 4pm	Faringdon Town Hall, The Pump House, 5 Market Place, Faringdon, SN7 7HL
Didcot	Saturday 10 February	11am – 4pm	Berro Lounge, Orchard Shopping Centre, 44 Orchard Street, Didcot, OX11 7LG

We really look forward to hearing your views and do share the consultation with your friends, family, and neighbours to spread the word and get as many voices as possible to join the conversation.

Successful residential waste contract extended

One of the country's most successful residential waste collection contracts has been extended as South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils announced an agreement to extend their joint contract with waste contractor, Biffa, for two more years. The contract will now run until June 2026.

The shared contract has helped keep the two districts near the top of the English recycling tables for over a decade. Our recent waste satisfaction survey on our household waste collections, indicating a high level of resident approval, with an impressive 82% of respondents expressing satisfaction, or high satisfaction, with the overall quality of the service provided.

The councils' joint contract with Biffa has run for 14 years in South Oxfordshire and 13 years in Vale of White Horse – during this time recycling rates have risen to 64% in South and 63% in Vale in 2023. In the ranking of top ten recycling authorities in England, this puts both districts in the top five – with South Oxfordshire second, and Vale of White Horse fourth, respectively.

Other major benefits to the councils have included:

- The food waste process produces biogas, which provides enough energy to power up to **4,800 homes**, and nutrient-rich bio-fertiliser which is sold to local farmers to use on their land.
- An average of just over **20,000 tonnes** of compost collected and processed a year from residents' garden waste goes to local farmers to be spread on farmland.

New waste strategy

The move to extend the current contract was driven by central government's delay in clearly outlining the forthcoming changes within the waste industry stemming from the Environment Act 2021. The extra two years will provide the necessary space to develop a brand-new waste strategy to determine an approach for the next 10 years.

Supporting awareness in 2024

We've published the calendar of national and local awareness events that the council will mark in the coming year. From Race Equality Week to Stress Awareness Month to the Great British Spring Clean, all the events and awareness days that we support are listed on our webpages:

- [Southoxon.gov.uk/diversitycalendar](https://southoxon.gov.uk/diversitycalendar)

Neighbourhood Planning Resources

In November SODC delivered an online presentation on neighbourhood planning for Town and Parish councils. If you or any of your town or parish councils missed the presentation, it is [available to watch here](#), alongside further useful information on the value of neighbourhood planning and what support is available.

Solar power in Wallingford

At the end of last year, Wallingford Sports Trust officially opened its new solar panels and batteries installation thanks in part to more than £40,000 of our grant funding.

We were very pleased to be able to contribute to this major energy-saving project to help keep the sports park going for years to come. You can find out more about this fantastic project, and other case studies, on the [South Oxfordshire improving energy efficiency webpage](#)

National Landscapes

All designated “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONBs) in England and Wales have been renamed as ‘National Landscapes’. The new name reflects their national importance and the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis.

This means our local AONBs will now be known as the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and The Chilterns National Landscape. You can find out more about the name change and the National Landscapes’ vision on the [National Landscapes website](#)

Developer contributions

In October 2023, our two districts transferred and released over more than two-and-a-half million pounds in infrastructure funding to provide a boost to our communities.

South transferred £908,127 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions to town and parish councils to help support new development in the area. Since April, a further £115,557 of Section 106 funding has been released to relevant council departments, town or parish councils or local organisations towards improving community facilities for the benefit of current and future residents of the district.

To find out more about the council’s [CIL spending](#) and [applying for S106 funding](#) please visit our website

Barclays customers can bank on Cornerstone

Cornerstone has partnered with Barclays Bank to become one of the bank’s ‘local sites’ for 2024. While no money will be handled and no transfers can be made on site, Barclays employees will be available to advise customers and offer services from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays. Members of the public can prebook appointments via the Barclay’s website and will meet advisors in the Flint Room.

New classes at Cornerstone

And that’s not all that’s new at Cornerstone for 2024, the centre has launched its spring season of classes promising ‘something for everyone’. These range from the adult art class Art Buffet to the children’s Youth Theatre classes and Street Dance. There are taster sessions so you can try before you buy. More information is available [on the Cornerstone website](#)

[Booking link](#) for planning surgeries for town and parish councils

Corporate Plan Performance Report – [Second Quarter](#)

[Climate Action Plan Performance Report – Second Quarter](#)