

District Councillor Update

July 2025

Cllr Jo Robb, Cllr James Norman

Local Government Reorganisation,

Our public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation is progressing well with our last public event taking place today (4 July) in Thame. At the time of writing, we've had over 1,346 responses to the survey which runs until 16 July.

Please take part in our survey and [encourage others to take part here](#). We're sending reminders out at the moment too.

Further information about our two unitary councils' proposal is available at <https://twocouncils.org>.

Oxford City Council's "Greater Oxford" proposal

Oxford City Council launched its public engagement this week for its alternative proposal, which is to create a [Greater Oxford Council](#). The city's online survey can be found on [Oxford City Council's engagement portal](#).

The city council is going to be holding public drop-in events in our area and we're passing on the details of these events so you can spread the word in your communities to ensure everyone is aware of the proposal and so the city council gets lots of engagement.

South Oxfordshire

- The Merry Bells in Wheatley between 10am and 1pm on 11 July
- The Berin Centre in Berinsfield between 10am and 1pm on 16 July
- Berro Lounge in Didcot between 4pm and 7pm on 29 July

OCC is seeking residents' views too. Details will be found here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/local-government-reorganisation-and-devolution>

Grants News:

Capital grant scheme remains open until 25th July

To support community projects that help improve the quality of life for local people, SODC's Capital Grant Scheme remains open for applications of up to £75,000. Organisations eligible to apply are: Town and parish councils, non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies, community-based organisations. More details here <https://tinyurl.com/5bvzf28d>

Performing Arts Grant

A new round of the £60,000 Performing Arts grant scheme will open for applications on 28 July. The scheme supports voluntary and community performing arts

organisations in South Oxfordshire, who will be able to apply for up to £5,000 in funding for projects that improve community wellbeing across the district.

We are holding a funding advice event at Cornerstone Arts Centre from **4pm – 6pm on Wednesday 9 July**. There are limited spaces available, and places must be booked in advance – [please register here](#).

More information can be found on our website southoxon.gov.uk/grants - please help us spread the word!

TOE Nature Recovery Funding

Last week saw the [official opening of the Rycote Meadow footpath](#) in Thame. It is part of the nature recovery work at the meadow and nature reserve, which has been part funded by South's environment fund managed by environmental charity, the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment. [More information on the fund available here](#)

Didcot Gateway Application Approved

The Planning Committee at SODC has approved plans for the redevelopment of the Didcot Gateway site including a new building proposed for use as office space for the council.

The application was delayed due to negotiations with the highways authority about transport to the site.

The proposals for a new building on land owned by the council form part of the long-overdue regeneration of the site opposite Didcot Parkway station. South's proposed building sits alongside development plans from Homes England, both contributing to an overall site masterplan.

The proposed building includes a mix of commercial office space and a public café. The site is currently an unattractive carpark and the scheme, if implemented, will create a positive welcome to Didcot for those arriving in the town.

The cabinet member has given approval for the site to be linked up to the electricity mains (essential for any sort of development in that location), but, with local government reorganisation happening and no clarity yet about the likely shape of any future unitary authority, the scheme will still have to pass commercial viability checks. Having the planning permission in the "back pocket" after long delays is a benefit, though whether the offices will be required and the scheme implemented is a matter for the future.

Support for Local Businesses

Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Partnership (OSEP) has secured additional funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide training and support for small businesses looking to benefit their local communities. Please could you share the link within your local community and local businesses that might benefit from training and peer support: <https://www.osep.org.uk/events/>

Free energy assessments now available to Oxfordshire's small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and community buildings can now access a free energy assessment worth £1,500. Participants will receive a tailored report with recommendations, estimated savings and advice on low-carbon tech like solar panels and heat pumps. Once assessed, they can also apply for up to £10,000 in

match funding to help put the plan into action.

<https://www.energysolutionsoxfordshire.org/free-energy-assessment/>

OCC are currently running four major resident consultations:

Part-night lighting and street lighting policy, deadline 6th July. Respond to proposals to introduce part-night lighting to improve the night-time environment for residents & wildlife, & also reduce energy & carbon emissions.

https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/pnl?tool=survey_tool

Oxfordshire (Adults) Learning Disability Plan 2025 – 2035, deadline 13th July.

The draft plan been developed in partnership with ‘experts by experience’, service providers, health and other local partners. It sets out some of the most important areas they said actions needed to be taken. Have your say here:

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ld-plan-2025>

Oxfordshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025: Comment (as a patient, consumer or community group) by 3rd August to inform the final assessment.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-pna-2025>

Free period products (both reusable and disposable) are **available in county council buildings** for all Oxfordshire residents in a trial to help achieve period equality for all. To better understand period product provision here, & shape a proposal for long-term provision to alleviate period poverty, residents’ anonymous feedback on the products and trial is requested:

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/free-period-products/surveys/questionnaire>