District Councillor Update – September 2024

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**Joint Local Plan update:**
Following two hugely successful public consultations, which saw South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District councils receive a Highly Commended award at the Planning Resource Awards 2024, the councils have now set out the next steps for their Joint Local Plan (JLP).

Over the past three years, the councils have been working on a plan that meets the needs for homes and infrastructure for the districts' communities and delivers on the councils' commitment to tackling the climate emergency and recovery of nature.

The response from local communities and businesses to the proposals has been overwhelmingly positive – the draft plan includes some of the most ambitious policies on carbon reduction, biodiversity net gain, affordable housing and dark skies ever seen in a Local Plan. Inappropriate or undeliverable sites that were allocated in the previous Plan are also being removed from the Joint Local Plan including two sites at in the Chilterns National Landscape at Nettlebed and the large strategic site at Chalgrove Airfield.

This month, the councils will publish the proposed Plan, including the evidence base and amendments that have been incorporated following the Regulation 19 consultation. At meetings of cabinet and Full Council on 19 September, councillors will decide whether this is the plan they want to submit to inspection.

A Regulation 18 consultation will follow in which members of the public are asked if they believe the plan is satisfactory and can be submitted for inspection.

Councillor David Rouane, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "The JLP is one of the most important documents we deliver as a council and has a lasting impact on our community. We are now striving to submit it as soon as possible as we recognise the importance of ensuring that any development is properly planned."

The Council has won more than 11 planning appeals in a row over the course of the past several weeks – thanks in part to the fact that we have an up to date Local Plan.

We will keep you updated and will be sure to send out the draft of the Plan when it becomes available.

**Grants**
The latest round of Councillor Community Grants has opened. Jo and James each have £5,000 to allocate to projects that could benefit our local communities. We are particularly keen to support projects that can protect and restore our natural world, promote action on the climate emergency and improve economic and community wellbeing.
In the past, we have used our grants to fund a range of projects and schemes including new playground equipment, tree and hedge planting, defibrillators, fingerpost signs and a new community service to combat rural loneliness.
Please get in touch if you have any questions and do let your community groups know about this opportunity!

**Revenue Grant**

The Revenue Grant Scheme aims to help voluntary and community organisations with their ongoing revenue expenses, giving them financial certainty and enabling them to invest in staff and expertise to keep their operations running.
The council offers in principle funding for two years and has a provisional budget of £667,992 to allocate. This is subject to annual approval by the council when setting its budget.
Organisations may consider using this funding to support training staff in new skills or to invest in new income streams to help diversify their fundraising.
Again, please let your local organisations know about this useful grant – many organisations have no problem raising capital funds but struggle with their revenue budget - this grant aims to address this.
Organisations can apply for a minimum grant of £10,000 and a maximum grant of £125,000 per annum over the two-year period.
The closing date for applications is midday 1 November 2024.
The services and activities must be able to demonstrate direct benefits to meet a clearly identified need for South Oxfordshire residents. They must contribute towards at least one of the council's externally focussed emerging Corporate Plan priorities.

- Action on climate change and nature recovery
- Inclusion, accessibility and accountability
- Thriving and healthy communities
- Homes and infrastructure that meet local need

Please contact Jo or James or the grants team directly with any questions:
www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants grants@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422 405

**"Ask for Angela"**
We are encouraging pubs, restaurants and cafes to join the growing list of licensed premises that are signed up to "Ask for Angela," the national scheme aimed at providing help for those who are feeling unsafe or receiving unwanted attention.
If someone needs help while in a registered 'Ask for Angela' venue, they just need to ask any member of staff "Is Angela in?". Staff are trained to recognise the request and to offer the appropriate support, such as keeping an eye on the individual, calling a friend, relative, taxi or the police - or helping them to leave the building via an alternative exit.
Twenty-four businesses across South and Vale have already signed up, but we'd like to see lots more get involved to ensure help is available for anyone who needs it.
Please encourage venues in your area to register – any that are interested should email Community Safety communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk or, for more information, visit the national Ask for Angela website. www.askforangela.co.uk