

## **District Councillor Report – Sam Casey-Rerhaye, November 2022**

### **Didcot Eco Fair**

Come along to a free family friendly event showcasing the district's fantastic sustainable businesses, with arts and crafts activities, food stalls and advice on how to reduce both our environmental impact and our heating bills.

The Didcot Eco Fair is **on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November (11am-3pm)** at Cornerstone and everyone is invited.

The day will include a Christmas jumper swap, so bring unwanted, clean jumpers and you could come away with something new to you for Christmas for free.

Further information can be found at our Didcot Eco Fair web page.

### **Climate Action Plan Performance Report**

SODC's first CAP quarterly performance report covering April-June 2022 has been published and is publicly available at

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/tackling-the-climate-emergency/>

This report provides a detailed review of activities and outcomes in the first quarter of this financial year and is "RAG rated" (Red/Amber/Green) to indicate where projects are on track, need attention or are at risk.

This CAP performance report accompanies the usual quarterly report on the Corporate Plan priorities, which is also available [online](#).

### **"Call for Land and Buildings" for the new Joint Local Plan**

We have published the results of the "Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change", this is part of the process in creating any Local Plan.

This process is usually called a Call for Sites, but we changed the name as we wanted sites that could have community and environmental uses, such as public open spaces or renewable energy.

We have created a short video to explain what the Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change is and what happens next. [You can find the video on our YouTube channel](#) and you can view the full results on [our interactive Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change website](#)

Please note these are **not** proposals the Council is making for development.

The Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change does not grant planning permission to any site submitted or confirm that the site will be suitable for development.

You do not need to contact anyone to say whether you support or object to these sites. We will assess the submissions on a range of environmental, heritage and physical constraints to determine their potential 'suitability', 'availability' and 'achievability'.

We will identify sites that may be suitable for further consideration through the Joint Local Plan, and we will consult you on those ones. More information is available on the [South/Vale](#) websites.

### **New Zero Carbon Homes in Wheatley**

A dozen zero-carbon, affordable homes will be built with help from the Council. The homes will be built on the brownfield site at Cullum House in Wheatley.

We are using some of the money we get from developers, known as Section 106 commuted sums, to help fund these affordable homes. It is part of a £5 million fund agreed by the council in its budget, from Section 106 money, to be spent on increasing the number of good quality affordable homes in the district.

The homes will be for "affordable rent" – defined as charging up to 80 per cent of market rates for rent. We are already providing more than £1.2 million towards the cost of creating new affordable housing in Henley and Thame.

### **The Queen's Green Canopy**

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth, and in accordance with the wishes of the King, the [Queen's Green Canopy](#) initiative will be extended to the end of March 2023 to give people the opportunity to plant trees to honour Her Majesty.

SODC is creating a record of all the trees planted across the district for The Queen's Green Canopy and we are asking residents to send pictures of their planted trees to us at [communications@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:communications@southandvale.gov.uk).

More information can be found at: [southoxon.gov.uk/greencanopy](https://southoxon.gov.uk/greencanopy)

## **Oxfordshire says “no, thanks” to the Government’s proposed Investment Zones**

The Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, Cllr Liz Leffman, wrote to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to explain why the County would not be applying for any Investment Zones.

SODC’s Leader, Cllr David Rouane, had already expressed our views on the matter and a motion put to Council on 13<sup>th</sup> October by the Green Group Leader, Cllr Robin Bennett, was passed with cross-party support. See:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/uncategorised/south-oxfordshire-calls-governments-investment-zone-initiative-disaster-in-making/>

With the change in Government, it is not altogether certain that the Investment Zones will survive in any case.

## **Maximum Taxi Tariffs agreed for Hackney cabs in the District**

Hackney carriages operating in South Oxfordshire will, for the first time, have a maximum fare they can charge passengers.

We have introduced the measure to help ensure passengers, especially those who rely on taxis to travel around such as those on low incomes or with disabilities, are not priced out of using taxis as the cost of living continues to rise.

At the same time, the fares agreed will allow taxi drivers to continue to run viable businesses, recognising their overheads are also rising.

We were previously one of only six councils in the country who didn’t set a tariff, so introducing them now brings us in line with other authorities – the tariff will still be the 16<sup>th</sup> highest in the country.

The fares only apply to Hackney carriages so passengers are able to shop around with private hire vehicles to get the best deal – harder to do when at a taxi rank or hailing a cab. The fares only apply for journeys within the South Oxfordshire area.

The new maximum fare for a two-mile journey on Tariff 1 will be £8.10, rising to £11.25 for Tariff 3 (applicable from 2am to 5.59am on weekdays and all day Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day).

Among the changes was also introducing a new £1.50 charge for additional passengers in vehicles which can carry more than four persons.

## **“Park and Charge” scheme wins an award!**

We are pleased to report that the Park and Charge scheme that put 124 electric vehicle chargers in 10 of the council-run car parks across both districts has won an excellence award, called an “Evie”.

Evidence is showing that the charging bays are being used more and more; our foresight in installing infrastructure *before* demand outstrips supply has been widely praised.

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