

District Councillor Report Cllr – Sam Casey-Rerhaye, March 2025

Garden Waste Permit: apply for your permit now!

This new scheme is now live and if you have or would like a brown garden waste bin, you will need to purchase an annual permit before April.

Please visit the council's website where you can follow instructions on how to do this. It's more efficient for the council (and so ultimately for you!) if you do it via the website if at all possible, and means people who don't have easy access to the website can more easily get in touch by telephone.

Garden waste scheme changes – South Oxfordshire District Council

Social housing allocation policy changes

You're invited to share your views on proposed changes to our Joint Housing Allocations Policy. The policy underpins the work to provide homes for those who need them most, setting out the criteria to join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is allocated.

Last updated in 2019, the policy needs refreshing to reflect current housing priorities in the district. There are four main proposed changes to the policy – all designed to help ensure no one is disadvantaged when it comes to allocating social housing.

We've opened a public consultation and details on how to take part are [on our website](#). The consultation runs until 11.59pm on Monday 17th March 2025.

Assistance to bring empty homes back into use

We're encouraging empty home owners to get in touch with the Council so we can discuss the benefits and options available.

See the Council website to see what help there is available to you if you own a home that is currently empty: [Are you an empty home owner? – South Oxfordshire District Council](#).

And tying in with National Empty Homes Week beginning on 3rd March, we'll also be encouraging residents to report empty homes to us via our website here: [Report an empty property – South Oxfordshire District Council](#).

Consultation on changes about how we allocate social housing

The District Council has opened a public consultation on proposed changes to the Joint Housing Allocations Policy on 18th February.

The policy underpins our work on providing homes to those who need them most, setting out the criteria to join the housing register and the rules for how social housing is allocated.

Last updated in 2019, the policy needs refreshing to reflect current housing priorities in the districts. There are four main proposed changes to the policy – all designed to help ensure no one is disadvantaged when it comes to allocating social housing.

The link to the consultation is here: [Housing Allocations Policy Review – Join the conversation – South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse – Citizen Space](#) on our Community Engagement website and the consultation runs until 18th March.

Want to apply for a grant from the Council?

We are holding a grant funding advice session at Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot on **Thursday 20th March, appointments available from 12.30pm to 4pm.**

Voluntary and community organisations will have the opportunity to discuss projects, ask questions about the application process including eligibility for any of the upcoming grant schemes.

Places are limited, so please book a time slot by emailing grants@southandvale.gov.uk or phone 01235 422405.

Alternatively, the team are happy to book a phone call or Teams meeting at a more convenient time. Please help us to spread the word!

Local Government Reorganisation

Green Party councillor, Andrea Powell, brought a motion to a special full council meeting last month on local government reorganisation.

The motion asked the Council leader to write to the Electoral Commission and the Minister regarding concerns over the electoral governance for Mayors – citing that the first past the post voting system the Conservative government brought in for Mayors and the high financial threshold for campaigns and deposits risked undemocratic and skewed outcomes that do not represent the areas fairly.

You can read the motion on the South Oxfordshire website on the Council meetings page: [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20th February 2025, 6.00pm.](#)

The motion was voted down, with all the LibDems voting against as well as other councillors, despite the fact that similar motions were passed by LibDems in other councils in Oxfordshire.

This was an odd outcome, as so many said they supported the sentiment but thought it wasn't the right time to have a motion on this!

I struggle to think of a better time to discuss accountability and democracy than when the government is proposing the biggest reorganisation of local government since 1972.

If you have any questions or issues you would like to contact me about:

sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk.

Or leave a message for me on 01235 635566.