

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

Draft Local Development Plan

The Joint Local Plan has been recommended to be withdrawn by the government inspectors.

Many of you will know that the Council has been working on a new Joint Local Plan with Vale of the White Horse Council. This was submitted to the government Inspectors and there was an inquiry in public last spring.

These inspectors have written to the Council to say that they believe that the 'Duty to Co-operate' with Oxford City has not been fully demonstrated and have recommended the Council withdraws the whole of the Joint Plan. This plan has been in the making for over four years.

All councillors received a briefing on the Council's options last week, none of which are very positive in my opinion.

I am deeply disappointed by this response by the Inspectors, and I know many residents will be too, as well as being concerned about the uncertainty in which this leaves the two Districts.

Speculative planning applications for houses and industry will likely become more common – as demonstrated by the recent application at Chalgrove.

I am very supportive of the progressive and climate & nature friendly policies in the draft local plan.

Oxford City had already had their own plan rejected over their housing needs assessment so this recommendation from the Inspectors seems bizarre and contradictory to me.

The Councils have written back to them after taking legal advice, pointing out errors and inconsistencies, but has not made any decision yet on whether to withdraw the Plan or not.

Cost of living grants

Food and Warmth Grant, previously known as the Household Support Fund, is now open for applications to help residents who are struggling with the cost-of-living pressures.

Voluntary and community organisations and town and parish councils can apply to support those who need help this winter.

Organisations can apply for up to £2,000 if un-constituted, £2,000–£5,000 if constituted, and up to £10,000 for collaborations between three or more not-for-profit organisations led by a constituted group.

The application window **closes at midday on 6 November 2025.**

There are more details about the eligibility and how to apply on our website: [Food and Warmth Grant Scheme 2025/2026 - Now open - South Oxfordshire District Council.](#)

Cornerstone events

Cornerstone Arts Centre invites you to embrace the “eerie” this November with two spine-tingling performances.

On Thursday 6th November, experience [Nosferatu on their big screen](#), as composer Chris Green brings Murnau’s 1922 vampire classic to life with a haunting mix of live electronics and acoustic sounds.

Then, on Wednesday 12th November, [Bark Bark](#) blends puppetry, cameras, and diorama sets to tell a darkly funny, unsettling story from a dog’s point of view.

From acclaimed live-cinema company Buzzcut Productions (from Oxford), this Edinburgh Fringe hit is a ‘must-see’ (and I have already booked!).

Garden Waste Bins

Residents who have purchased a permit for the council brown bin garden waste collection service in South Oxfordshire or the Vale of White Horse can have extra garden waste collected for free, on their normal scheduled collection day only, between 27th October and 7th November.

Please use, as a maximum, the standard sized (60L) black refuse-style sacks or boxes / containers which combined total no more than a standard bin full.

Bags and containers should be left open so crews can easily empty them into the rear of the vehicle and be able to check there are not contaminants

All the garden waste collected will be taken to a facility near Wallingford where it is composted. The compost is then sold on to local farmers for use on their farmland as a soil conditioner.

The new permit system means that 95 per cent of all garden waste customers can now be reached by email, which means the Councils can quickly keep in touch with any known service changes and it saves a huge amount of administrative work to manage the scheme.

Chief Executive change

The Chief Executive of the two councils has left the council by mutual agreement and the process of recruiting a new one has started. This will be done slightly differently because the District Councils have only three years left.

Meanwhile the councils are being run by the two deputies stepping up into the role and sharing the duties.

For any support or queries please email me: sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk.