

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

Joint Local Plan update

The council has written a second letter to the Inspectors in response to their advice to withdraw the draft Plan. You can read the letter here:

[LPA40 South and Vale letter to our Inspectors 20th October 2025_Redacted](#)

The letter points out the most recent correspondence from the Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, to Paul Morrison, Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate.

The Minister outlines his expectation that local plans submitted in the current plan-making system should be treated with an appropriate degree of flexibility.

He specifically refers to the Duty to Cooperate (DtC), asking Inspectors to be proportionate in what is expected as the DtC evidence, and to consider the context. His message is directly relevant to our Joint Local Plan.

The Minister states: “In advance of the new plan-making system and mechanisms for cross-boundary cooperation coming into force, the final set of local plans being delivered within the current system remain essential to facilitating the effective delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure.

It is therefore critical that Inspectors approach examinations of current system plans with the appropriate degree of flexibility.

The evidencing of expectations to establish whether the legal and soundness tests have been met – including with respect to the Duty to Cooperate – should be proportionate to the context in which plans in the existing system are being prepared.”

Furthermore, Oxford City Council has reconsidered their housing need and published a draft option with lower housing numbers than in their previous one. The letter from SODC shows this revised housing requirement in a table:

Oxford's housing need	21,740
Oxford's capacity	9,851
Unmet need for Oxford already agreed in South, Vale, West and Cherwell	14,300
Balance (surplus)	+ 2,411

I hope this will convince the Inspectors to re consider their advice.

Postal Voting

New regulations mean residents who vote by post now need to reapply every three years if they wish to continue to cast their ballot this way.

Starting with a short trial in October, the Council will write to people when their postal vote is up for renewal. The first group this rule change impacts, and who will receive a notification, will be those who applied for a postal vote on or before 31st January 2024. They will need to re-apply by 31st January 2026, otherwise their postal vote will expire.

You can find more information on postal voting on the [Electoral Commission website](#).

Equalities and Diversity Roadshow

The Council is travelling across the districts over the next few weeks for an Equalities Roadshow, speaking to the public about what the councils are doing to support equality and finding out more about what equality means to them.

They have been in Thame and Wantage and the roadshow continues:

Monday 3rd November, Abingdon Market Place, 8am – 3pm

Thursday 13th November, Henley Market Place, 8am – 3pm

Friday 21st November, Wallingford Town Hall, 9am – 2pm

(Didcot – date and location TBC)

Waste and Recycling Updates Guide

There are new easy-to-read guides to help residents with their waste and recycling. The guides include what items go in which bin, who to contact if a collection is missed, how to reduce your waste and much more.

There are two guides, available to view now on our website. Paper copies will also be provided to new homes.

For **South Oxfordshire** residents:

- [Houses with individual wheelie bins – guide to waste and recycling](#)
- [Flats and properties with communal bins – guide to waste and recycling](#)

New webpages for Towns and Parishes

The Climate team has developed a webpage hosting a variety of information for them from funding opportunities, ready-made strategies

and case studies of other community projects which could offer them a framework for what they are trying to achieve.

The page is under our Action on Climate and Nature page called **What Town and Parish Councils can do** ([South/ Vale](#)).

Energy Saving Help and Ideas

If residents are concerned about heating bills this winter, they may be interested in our [updated energy saving leaflet](#) available on our websites ([South/Vale](#)).

The flyer comprises information about energy saving solutions from insulation to air source heat pumps and details of where people can get funding to help install these – including the new Warm Homes Grant.

If Parish Councils would like some hard copies of this leaflet, please contact [our Climate Team](#).

Grant application deadline coming up:

The Food and Warmth Grant Scheme – previously known as the Household Support Fund – is open for applications until **6th November 2025**. Voluntary and community organisations and town and parish councils can apply to support those who need the most help this winter.

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