

## **District Councillor Report – Cllr Sam Casey-Rerhaye, January 2026**

### **New Leader for the Council**

Cllr David Rouane has resigned after four years as leader of the council and the new leader of the LibDem administration is Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers. She has been in Cabinet since 2019.

The whole council endorsed her nomination at the council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December; I think she will make a good leader who has relevant and wide-ranging experience and values, but it has to be said that the LibDems run the council and in the end, of course, it is their call as they have a majority.

We now have a new Chief Executive too, in Adrianna Partridge, whose appointment was also confirmed by all councillors. Adrianna has been deputy leader of the council for many years and having worked closely with her when I was on Cabinet, I have a great deal of confidence in her.

Also at the Council meeting, I seconded a motion on the Thames Water proposed reservoir, asking for an emergency plan to be made ahead of its construction. Currently the plan need only be made after the reservoir is ready to function.

Many residents and businesses who would be affected by an emergency discharge from the reservoir feel this leaves them in a precarious position, not knowing what preparations they can or should make or where to go for support.

The motion was passed unanimously. The leader of the council will now write to the Minister responsible requesting this.

Green Party councillor, Jo Robb asked two questions on how the council monitored actions taken by Capita as contractor on unpaid council tax bills and whether the Cabinet member was assured that actions were proportionate and fairly executed.

The answers she received were detailed but not as reassuring as needed, but the questions did a good job of highlighting that the council needs to constantly get assurance that vulnerable people are not being harassed, intimidated or being asked to pay unreasonable fees.

Cllr Robb continues to follow up with the Cabinet member for further assurances.

I and my fellow Green Party Councillors supported a motion from Cllr Snowden (Con) on supporting the hospitality industry in the District as

much as we are legally able to do, in this time of escalating costs. This motion was passed.

Information on the motions and questions in the meeting can be found on the website here: [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025, 6.00pm](#)

### **SESRO consultation response**

The Thames Water South-East Reservoir Option consultation is still open – **until 13<sup>th</sup> January**. South Oxfordshire District Council is compiling its response, but the council position remains the same in that it maintains its opposition to one huge reservoir as unjustified.

I have read the draft response and have made some small suggested changes on the issues it presents for those living in our ward, including the emergency response plan (or lack of one).

**Please consider responding yourselves here: [South East Strategic Reservoir Option \(SESRO\) - Statutory Consultation 2025](#)**

### **Waste Vehicles – disappointing decision**

Despite careful and stringent scrutiny by the Joint Scrutiny committee, led by Green councillors, Kat Foxall (Vale) and Jo Robb (South), the Cabinet decided to go ahead with buying a new fleet of waste vehicles powered by fossil fuels.

The committee was not clear how this decision had been reached, how it aligned with our carbon targets or why alternatives, such as leasing, were dismissed as not suitable.

### **Joint Local Plan update**

Continuing the correspondence, the council has written back to the Planning Inspectors requesting them to continue with the examination of the Joint Local Plan, after the Minister's statement.

The council has asked the Inspectors to resume the hearings and progress the Joint Local Plan through examination and, all being well, to adoption.

The letter is published here: [LPA41 Councils' reply to the Inspectors' letter setting out how the councils wish to proceed](#).

I hope this will mean the jeopardy that this Plan has been in will be settled and we can look forward to having it adopted this year.

## **Oxford-Cambridge Growth Commission**

An interim report has been published – so far, so OxCam growth deal. You can read it here: [\*\*Interim report of the Oxford Growth Commission\*\*](#).

The report still focuses on the requirement for large numbers of homes without being clear what homes for whom, despite the fact we can see that private market homes are not solving the housing affordability crisis for those on lower incomes and young people.

Disappointingly, there is nothing new or innovative in the report at all.

## **Laptop Donation**

Both Vale and South District councils donated the older laptops which still work but are no longer usable for South and Vale to SOFEA and Aspire for their 'getting people online' programme and supporting local people. They hoped to get many out in time for Christmas.

**A new calendar** for 2026 has been published with dates and campaign weeks that the council will campaign for or mark in some way: [\*\*South Oxfordshire 2025 Diversity and Social Campaign calendar\*\*](#)

For any support or queries please email me: [\*\*sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:sam.casey-rerhaye@southoxon.gov.uk).