

## **District Councillor Report – Sam Casey-Rerhaye, December 2021**

### **SODC Covid Community Hub remains operational**

The SODC Community Hub team has continued to provide practical support and advice for residents struggling at the moment, supplementing the excellent work done more locally in our communities.

For the month of November, we've handled 217 enquires resulting in 11 food parcels and 56 referrals for further support.

We've also called 242 residents to offer help and made 163 follow up calls to those who had received a test and trace payment as a result of needing to self-isolate.

A total of £17,500 in supermarket vouchers has also been given to support residents self-isolating.

SODC has also made over 250 payments in the last quarter to those who have lost income due to having to self-isolate and paid out £4.8m to businesses using funds provided by central government.

### **A New Procurement Strategy for the Council**

A new procurement strategy has been implemented which has the following aims:

- Ensure council spending contributes to the economic, social, and environmental benefits for our communities
- Bring value for money to the forefront of any expenditure
- Ensure efficient and economic contracts are managed well
- Reduce costs and risks within the supply chain

From now on any procurement must now include sustainability and represent economic and social value for the community. How and what the councils buy will support the councils' corporate plans and priorities for the next five years.

### **Severe Weather and People who are Sleeping Rough**

The Council has a Severe Weather Protocol which means that emergency accommodation is made available for everyone who is homeless and/or rough sleeping. This was invoked at the end of November and will be throughout the winter as necessary.

### **Litter picking service suspended over Christmas and New Year**

Anyone planning a litter pick in January please be advised that we are suspending the service from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December until Monday 24<sup>th</sup>

January to allow our waste contractor to focus on collecting household waste at this, their busiest time.

We will not be able to lend litter picking equipment nor pick up collected litter during this period. If you are planning on organising a litter pick then please give the waste team two weeks' notice.

A guide to organising a litter pick with the council is on the website: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/litterpicking](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/litterpicking)

### **Councillor Community Grants**

The second round for applying for a Councillor Grant has now opened and will close on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022. I still have about £2,000 left.

Information on all SODC grant schemes can be found at <https://southoxon.gov.uk/grants>

### **Garden Waste Collections**

We are now able to start taking on new customers for the garden waste service. Anyone interested should go to

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/garden-waste/>

or call the main Council number for more details: 01235 422422

### **Community Safety Partnership**

SODC is part of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which is made up of different agencies to reduce crime and the fear of crime, whilst building trust and confidence within our communities.

In addition to **anti-social behaviour, hate crime, rural crime, burglary, fraud and cyber-crime**, and terrorism, the CSP will focus on three key priorities:

- Tackling domestic violence and abuse, including early intervention to reduce harm and improve services for victims
- Working with vulnerable people and children to reduce the likelihood of being exploited
- Reducing serious youth violence, knife crime and harm and vulnerability caused by drugs and alcohol

To read more about the plan see here: [Introduction \(southoxon.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Motorbike Noise along A4074**

We raised the issue of speeding and noise pollution by motorbikes along the A4074 at our annual meeting with the Police and Crime

Commissioner, Chief Constable and Area Commander on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

Apparently, Surrey County Council is trialling “noise cameras” but there are lots of technical problems with them, not the least of which is that it is only noise from exhausts which is regulated, not engine noise!

The other challenge is proving which motorbike has caused the noise nuisance when several are riding together.

We will continue to press for increased enforcement activity by Thames Valley Police.

### **Planning Enforcement**

At its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Cabinet will be considering an updated **Planning Enforcement Statement**, which sets out the new approach proposed by officers to the triage and handling of complaints to improve efficiency, transparency and communication.

The team currently has a huge backlog of complaints to process (there was a significant increase during Covid lockdowns) and the methodology used is labour-intensive and does not adequately prioritise the most serious breaches.

Once the new statement is approved, clear information will be provided on the SODC website and councillors have requested that Officers compile an information pack for Town and Parish Councils.

It is worth saying that SODC is in the top 4% of Councils in terms of planning enforcement action taken already and that the service is not a legal duty and is resource-intensive.

The Planning Enforcement Statement hasn't been updated since 2016 and there have been a number of changes to the National Planning Policy Framework since then which also need to be taken into account.

### **Q2 2021/22 Corporate Plan Performance Report**

The Council publishes a quarterly performance report indicating progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in our Corporate Plan.

The report for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (July-September) has now been published and can be found on our website at

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/corporateplan>