



January 2019

Have your say on our Local Plan

We have published our draft Local Plan, which sets out our plans for new developments in South Oxfordshire until 2034 - it includes our proposals for the main new housing sites in our district.

We'd like to invite you to provide a formal response that we will submit to the government along with the plan, to be examined and considered by a planning inspector.

You have until 5pm on 18 February to submit your comments. You can see the [plan here](#) along with information on how you can have your say.

Leisure in South Oxfordshire

Last year, we carried out a survey on the leisure facilities available across the district to look at the future of leisure and sport activities in our district. Taking into account your comments in that survey, and following revisions to the Local Plan, we have made some changes to the leisure study. Please see the [new documents here](#). The leisure study should be considered alongside the Local Plan.

Work starts on community centre

Work has begun on the largest of three new community facilities at Great Western Park, in Didcot/Harwell. The centre will include two large multi-use rooms suitable for exercise classes, theatrical performances, community group meetings and parties, plus a number of smaller meeting rooms. A secure area for toddler groups and a cafe will also be incorporated into the building, with plenty of room for storage throughout and a dedicated room for the local policing team completing the layout.

The building is due to open its doors this autumn and, once complete, will be gifted to the Vale of White Horse District Council to operate the building.

Empty homes council tax rise

To reduce the number of empty properties and encourage owners to bring the properties back into use, we've increased our charges for the long-term empty homes in the district. Owners will have to pay more council tax on homes that have been left empty for more than two years, with an even greater premium added to their bill after five years and ten

years unoccupied. Currently, there are 183 long-term empty properties across the district, many of which have been left that way for several years. [More details here.](#)

Business Breakfast 2019

This year's South and Vale business breakfast is being held on 5 February at the Oxford Thames Hotel from 7.30am.

Hosting the event will be Cllr Paul Harrison, Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration at South Oxfordshire District Council, who will introduce two impressive speakers from the business world. Bertie Van-Wyk from Herman Miller will give a talk on how wellbeing in the workplace can increase productivity and Chris Barnet from 1973 Ltd. will give his take on what a rapidly expanding businesses needs to look for when trying to find the right business locations.

The event is free to business representatives, and interested parties, and includes a complimentary breakfast. To book your place, please visit our [SO Business website.](#)

Charity event

The Chairman of South Oxfordshire District Council, Cllr Lorraine Hillier, is hosting a charity dinner on 6 April at Phyllis Court in Henley. The evening will include a three course meal with songs and stories from Mike Hurst, a music producer to such artists as Mark Bolan, Cat Stevens and Showaddywaddy.

Proceeds from the event will raise money for her chosen charities - Citizen's Advice and The Smallwood Trust, a national charity that helps women living in poverty. Menus and ticket prices are yet to be confirmed, but if you'd like to reserve your place, please contact karen.dodd@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422082.

Sixth best place to live in the UK

Since last year, South Oxfordshire has moved up five places to become the sixth best place to live in the UK.

According to the Halifax Quality of Life survey, our area has gone from eleventh to sixth over the past twelve months with continuous improvement of local people's health and well-being, employment and earnings, education and access to housing and broadband.

Here's hoping we can move up even further next year!



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