

Title	District Councillors' Report
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Parish	Ewelme Parish Council
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New Planning System Update

The new Planning System upgrade is now complete and the new system is up and running. See <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/uncategorised/important-changes-to-planning-and-land-charging-services/>

A Town & Parish Council online briefing event about the new system was held in April and a recorded version of that is [available](#) for viewing, together with training videos. The new system is quite different to the previous one, so it's worth watching the videos before diving in.

Alongside the changes to the Planning and Land Charges system, the interactive mapping system on the Councils' websites (which are used to search for areas of the Districts, including planning applications, tree preservation orders and land owned by the Councils) is also being upgraded. Also new software for our Environmental Services, Private Sector Housing, and Community Safety teams will be introduced soon.

If you have any queries please refer in the first instance to our [South Oxfordshire](#) news page, which has more details including a timeline and the various services impacted.

Survey on Waste Management and Street Cleaning

The Council is currently running an online survey to gain feedback on what residents think of waste management, recycling and street cleaning in the District. Last year over 2100 responses were received, with more than 81% indicating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with SODC's performance in this area. Certain areas for improvement were identified, and as a result staff received training in returning bins after emptying, monitoring street cleaning and litter bin emptying. More communication has also been provided about what should be put into each bin with a particular focus on food waste bins. The 2026 survey will run until 4th June at <https://southandvale.gov.uk/WasteSurvey> (NB. It does not cover household recycling centres, as these are operated by OCC).

Live-Streaming of Full Council Meetings

Finally, we are able to resume live-streaming of Full Council meetings following the installation of new equipment at the Abbey House offices and the transfer of meetings from Didcot Civic Hall. The first meeting to be streamed live was the Annual Meeting of the Council on 14th May, at which Andrea was elected as the new Chair for the next municipal year. Each Chair gets an opportunity to elect two charities that the council will focus on during their term. This year, I have picked two local charities: Style Acre, a charity that supports local people with learning disabilities and autism, and Cycling Without Age Oxfordshire, a charity that provides free trishaw rides to elderly, isolated, and vulnerable adults in the Oxfordshire County. I will be taking part in a 66-mile cycle event on Dartmoor on 20 June to raise funds for my charities.

Over £1.6m boost for South Oxfordshire infrastructure

Over the last six months, the council has transferred over £1.6 million to invest in vital infrastructure delivered by the council, town and parish councils and other community

organisations. These investments have helped many projects, such as public art, youth services, sports facilities and eco-friendly improvements.

S106 funding transferred between **1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026** has totalled £1,016,390. The council has also transferred £649,587 of CIL to town and parish councils that have experienced CIL liable development in their area that was collected during this six-month period.

[Follow this link for a breakdown of S106 funds have been approved and paid out and CIL monies transferred for South](#) (the document should download automatically).

Capital Grant Scheme now Open

The Capital Grant scheme opened on 26th May and there is a total pot of £320k available. All the usual rules apply – bids can range from £5k to £75k but can only represent a maximum of 50% of the total project cost.

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Update

Taken from the Leader's Statement to the Council on 14th May 2026:

Since the consultation period on the three proposals ended, officers across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire have been working collaboratively on activity appropriate to this pre-decision phase. That has mainly focused on:

- Baselining activity advised by Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), gathering data across the system in a number of workstreams such as Finance, HR, Property, Contracts, Customer and IT. This will be an important dataset as we move to the next phase of work following a decision from central government.
- Work has also been undertaken to establish the system programme management framework to progress local government reorganisation (LGR).
- Following decisions in other areas, officers have been analysing the processes MHCLG have required from those councils including the development of draft Structural Change Orders and what that might mean for us.
- Within South, officers are working hard to develop resourcing plans, a programme structure and work packages to deliver this work, alongside devolution/spatial development strategies (SDS) requirements.

It will take some time for these arrangements to bed in, but it will stand us in great stead to deliver on the ambitions of our council.

Since we last met, devolution meetings have continued to take place. However, the inclusion of Swindon has continued to be a thorny issue. It is safe to say that it is unlikely that the Thames Valley would reach the unanimity required by the now ex minister of devolution. I am of the view that in order to power ahead with a strategic authority, by far the easiest thing would be for Oxfordshire and Berkshire to go it alone for the time being.

Joint Local Plan Latest

A third inspector has been appointed to examine the JLP, with the first sessions in public due to happen in July. An additional Full Council meeting has been scheduled for 18th June to agree the next steps with the Joint Local Plan (the current Emerging JLP and the one which will have to follow immediately after its adoption using the new Standard Method).