

SODC ward councillors' report

Shiplake – 14th June 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

SODC's public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation is progressing well with the last public event taking place on 4 July in Thame. At the time of writing, they have had over 1,346 responses to the survey - which runs until 16 July.

Please take part in our survey and [encourage others to take part here](#). Further information about our two unitary councils' proposal is available at <https://twocouncils.org>.

Changes to Government Neighbourhood Planning Support

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has recently announced that it will no longer fund national neighbourhood planning consultancy and support services beyond 2025. This includes both the grant funding and technical advice that community groups previously accessed through Locality.

Despite this change, the Government has reaffirmed its view that neighbourhood plans remain an important part of the planning system, and that communities can continue to prepare them where they see value in doing so.

SODC want to reassure communities in South Oxfordshire that the NP planning team will continue to support them through the neighbourhood planning process.

SODC have also provided general information on the council website: [South](#).

Capital grant scheme closes soon!

Organisations with a community project to help improve the quality of life for local people that needs funding, still have time to apply for up to £75,000 from the SODC Capital Grant! The grant gives organisations a financial boost towards capital expenditure such as making improvements to buildings or play areas.

Applicants must show how their projects will help improve the quality of life for people in South Oxfordshire through projects that; support thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, provide infrastructure that meets local need, that take action on climate change and nature recovery, and improve participation, accessibility and accountability.

Organisations eligible to apply are:

- Town and parish councils
- Non-profit businesses and Community Interest Companies
- Community-based organisations

The Capital Grant Scheme is open for applications until **25 July**. Applicants can apply online through the SODC website, southoxon.gov.uk/grants where the full guidance is available to help submit the best possible application.

Food and Safety achievements

SODC have published this [infographic](#) highlighting Food and Workplace Safety achievements during 2024-25.

The infographic breaks down inspection results, including that **97.7** per cent of the 1,179 premises they inspected broadly complied with hygiene standards with 658 achieving a 5* rating. A total of 54 premises were identified as non-broadly compliant and were therefore supported to make improvements.

Furthermore, SODC dealt with more than 2,400 requests from the public on food safety and hygiene related issues.

Top ten in the UK for climate and nature recovery

SODC are in the top ten performing district councils in the country for taking action on climate and nature recovery! According to the Climate Emergency UK's (CEUK) 2025 [climate action scorecard](#).

South scored highly for 'planning and land use' (how councils use their planning powers and their local plans to ensure low emission new buildings and homes developments are built to minimise their impact on the environment).

SODC also did well on the 'biodiversity' section which examines actions by local authorities to protect and increase biodiversity in the area through their management of their green spaces and biodiversity net gain requirements for developers.

See more on the news page: [South](#)

Performing Arts grant coming soon

A new round of the £60,000 Performing Arts grant scheme will open for applications on 28 July. The scheme supports voluntary and community performing arts organisations in South Oxfordshire, who will be able to apply for up to £5,000 in funding for projects that improve community wellbeing across the district.

SODC are holding a funding advice event at Cornerstone Arts Centre from **4pm – 6pm on Wednesday 9 July**. There are limited spaces available, and places must be booked in advance – [please register here](#).

More information can be found on the website southoxon.gov.uk/grants - please help us spread the word!

[Mike Giles & Leigh Rawlins](#)

District Councillors