

SODC ward councillors' report

Shiplake – 10th November 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

Ahead of the November deadline, all 3 of the proposed options for local government reorganisation have published their draft proposals. They can be read at the below links. The councils proposing each option are now undergoing various review, scrutiny and approval processes ahead of submission later this month.

One unitary proposal - <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/local-government-reorganisation-and-devolution/one-oxfordshire>

Two unitary proposal - <https://twocouncils.org/home>

Three unitary proposal - <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils>

On 6th November SODC's council overwhelmingly supported the "Two unitary" proposal. Under the plan, South Oxfordshire would form part of a new Ridgeway Council with Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire. The proposal aims to deliver better services, save around £59.8 million a year, and strengthen local representation. This proposal is supported by 5 councils – 4 from Oxfordshire (incl WODC and Cherwell DC) and West Berkshire; the northern unitary would be "Oxford City and Shires" – incl WODC and Cherwell DC.

The Three unitary proposal is only supported by Oxford City; this proposal is far from conforming to the Government's guideline population of 500 thousand. The One Unitary proposal has not been supported by any full council – Including OCC's one, but will be submitted by the OCC Cabinet alone.

[Read the full announcement](#)

Joint Local Plan Update

South Oxfordshire District Council has asked Planning Inspectors to reconsider their initial findings on the Joint Local Plan, following a letter from the Minister for Housing and Planning. The council believes new guidance and updated housing figures should allow Inspectors to take a more proportionate approach.

[Read more about this update](#)

Local infrastructure and facilities - £900,000 boost

Over the last six months, more than £900,000 has been invested in local infrastructure across South Oxfordshire, supporting projects such as public art, refurbishment works, and new equipment at Didcot Wave Leisure Centre.

The funding comes from developer contributions through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) agreements.

[View CIL and S106 funding breakdown](#)

Remembering the fallen

On Sunday 9th and on Armistice Day (Tuesday 11th November), SODC's buildings will fall silent to honour those who gave their lives in service to maintain our freedoms.

As Chair, Cllr Katherine Keats-Rohan will represent South Oxfordshire at the Poppies to Paddington wreath-laying service at Didcot Parkway.

Breaking the cycle of homelessness

The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how we're preventing homelessness and helping residents find secure, sustainable housing.

[Read the full strategy](#) / [View media release](#)

Updated social housing allocation policy

An updated Housing Allocation Policy is now in place, setting out who can join the housing register and how social housing is allocated.

[Read the policy](#)

Winter in South Oxfordshire

Our new "Winter in South Oxfordshire" guide offers practical advice to help residents stay safe and warm. It includes information on heating support, tackling damp and mould, and guidance for extreme weather.

[Read the Winter in South Oxfordshire guide](#)

South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) consultation

Thames Water is consulting on its proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) until 13 January 2026.

[Take part in the consultation](#)

Contact: info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk

Postal vote reapplications

Residents who vote by post must now reapply every three years to continue using this method. Those who applied on or before 31 January 2024 must reapply by 31 January 2026.

[More information on postal voting](#)

Help for town and parish councils – Climate & Nature

A new section on our Action on Climate and Nature webpage offers guidance for parish councils starting their own climate and biodiversity projects. It includes funding opportunities, templates, and case studies.

[What Town and Parish Councils Can Do \(South Oxfordshire\)](#)

SODC Councillor Community Grants

This grant scheme has now opened for this year. Each councillor will get a fund of £7,500, for projects within their ward. This is an increase of 50% on the past.

Since Sonning Common is a 2-member ward the funds will total £15,000. I would estimate that pro-rata Shiplake may represent £3.6k between Mike and me.

Please contact us to discuss projects and there is more info at :-

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/councillor-community-grants/>

The closing deadline is noon on Friday 5th December 2025.

Mike Giles & Leigh Rawlins

District Councillors