

SODC Monthly Briefing – Nov 2022

Cllr Caroline Newton, Haseley Brook Ward

Harrington

You may be aware that proposals to build a new town of 6500 homes at Harrington (off the M40 at J7 between Tetsworth, the Haseleys and Milton Common) have been revived by the promoters, Summix. Their intention is for it to be included in the new Joint Local Plan which will update the current Local Plan 2035 and extend it to 2041. Beyond the location and the scale, the proposal has not been fleshed out by Summix yet. They have held a series of roadshow events (in Milton Common, Thame and Oxford) and will be holding a 'Community Planning Weekend' 11-15 November at the Belfry, Milton Common.

I remain completely opposed to the concept. Firstly, I don't believe that there is a need for this many additional homes in this district: LP 2035 controversially allocated space for over 28,000 houses (to be built in the period 2011-2035). It is unlikely the forthcoming (summer 2023) assessment of need will project an additional 6,500 across the district. Secondly a large new town at this location would do untold damage to the local area which I cannot believe would be offset by the services and infrastructure it might bring – in terms of the impact of traffic, damage to landscape, loss of agricultural land etc etc. Thirdly, any new settlement of this scale needs access to sustainable public transport systems, particularly trains. There are no railways near this site, and no indication from Network Rail that any are planned.

I will work with parish councils and the Haseley Brook Action Group to monitor and inform you of any developments.

Strategic Sites – update

Land North of Bayswater Brook: Application expected to be submitted in Dec.

Wheatley: scoping opinion submitted, and applicant is revising access arrangements before submitting a new application

Culham: masterplan workshops and transport meetings ongoing

Housing

The housing team are continuing to see an increase in demand for housing services resulting from the cost-of-living crisis and the Ukrainian refugee situation. At the end of October, the number of households in emergency accommodation was 10, a rise in almost 50% on the previous year. 2 households which had been in emergency accommodation moved into long-term accommodation.

The number of households which received case officer support to prevent or end homelessness in Oct rose to 44. The percentage of successful homelessness prevention cases in October was 85% , which significantly outperforms the South East average of 55%.

The number of households in housing need on SODC's housing register at the end of Oct was 1217. The number is likely to rise in November.

The current target for the number of homes to be delivered in South Oxon in 2022/23 is 260. The number delivered by the end of Q2 was 159.

Cost of Living

A roundtable meeting took place in Oct with voluntary sector representatives and councils across Oxon, Officers are mapping out the availability of 'warmer spaces' across the district.

SODC has moved

SODC is now – for the time being – based at Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon OX14 3JE. All council and committee meetings will take place there with the exception of Full Council which will be held at Didcot Civil Hall.