

OCC (Sonning Common & Henley South) councillor's report

Shiplake – 13th April 2026

New Strategic Authority

The Government have included Swindon (along with Bucks, Berks and Oxfordshire) in the Thames Valley “Spatial Development Strategy” area. Indications are that the (Labour) Government intend to force Swindon into the new TV Strategic Authority. Swindon has long been part of Wiltshire and has no cultural or economic links with Oxfordshire or the Thames Valley. Its economy is self-contained and does not relate to the industry sectors of the TV. The Government have also decided that the TV will start off as a Functional Strategic Authority rather than a Mayoral one; the FSA has much less powers and UK Gov funding. This sits at odds with suggestions of high growth.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Local Government Reorganisation consultation has now concluded. A decision is expected in late July on which proposal the Government would like to take forward. Then it is expected that there will be elections for the new authority in May 2027 and that it will take over from the County and District councils on 1 April 2028.

Director of Public Health Annual Report

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2025/26 offers a comprehensive and accessible review of Oxfordshire's progress in addressing health inequalities since the 2019/20 report, “Some Are More Equal Than Others”.

The county council is a “Marmot” authority. Marmot seeks to address the health disadvantages of children before they expand into more serious health, educational and developmental problems. Focus goes on particular areas of deprivation and is co-ordinated with the NHS.

The report is being delivered as an interactive website, enhancing accessibility and engagement for a diverse audience. This digital format allows users to easily navigate, search, and personalise their experience, making complex data and findings more engaging and meaningful. Key messages will be presented through varied media, including text, videos, infographics, graphs, and animations.

[Homepage | Public Health Report Oxfordshire](#)

Potholes and Highways

Work continues to address the backlog of potholes with good progress on the most serious ones. This helped by much better weather now. With spring, the capital programme of road dressing and resurfacing is proceeding.

Flood Grants

Communities who want to carry out projects to reduce the impact of flooding can apply for grants of up to £25,000.

For the third year running, Oxfordshire County Council is offering groups the chance to apply for grants of up to £25,000 for work to make their communities more resilient to flooding.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/more-grants-on-offer-to-help-communities-tackle-flooding/>

Councillor Priority Fund

This fund supports councillor priorities in local areas and has re-opened for the 2nd of the two-year 2025-27 period to support local community projects.

The application closing deadline will be 5pm on 30 November 2026.

Shiplake represents about 17% pro rata of the Sonning Common & Henley South division – so say £1.7k. I believe this was claimed in the 2025 window.

Applicants will be required to open an account to submit their application form. It would be helpful to have some liaison before submission to consider opportunities and any competing bids.

To find out more and how to apply please see

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/communities/councillor-priority-fund>

Leigh Rawlins

County Councillor (Sonning Common & Henley South)