

Title	County Council Report
Authors	OCC Cllr S Povolotsky
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 11 th January 2024

Firstly a Happy New Year and secondly its not a full report this month – as December was mostly meetings and OCC has despatched the letters as a result of the 2 Water Motions I took to Council in November and December.

I have also sent you a copy of the letter I send to David Johnston and his reply / email correspondence since, and the flooding at Mellors.

Going Independent

Some of you may have seen I resigned the Party Whip at both OCC and VOWHDC in early December – Why – because no one is listening. Our division has the biggest growth and yet the lowest investment in infrastructure. I fought hard for parents and children's voices in 2022/23 and when the SEND cabinet role came up I asked the group and yet the feedback was I am not compliant enough for the role. I didn't come into politics to comply with some 'way of working' which politicians set, I comply with the standards and procedures set out for me as a councillor, but my role is to be YOUR voice. How can you be a strong voice with clipped wings, or walls of silence despite raising critical issues. I was left out of consultation responses at Vale on SESRO – twice, and that's unacceptable given the impacts on Steventon and Hanneys (and further afield like East Hendred), and my fight for SEND left me out in the cold, the truth isnt clearly what politicians want to hear. What I was never prepared for was the politics inside politics and I now sit as an Independent, on the back benches. Whilst I have lost my seat on People Scrutiny I have gained a seat on the new Education and Young Peoples Scrutiny committee which I have supported the last 12 months. I am afraid some things are more important than Party politics, and given the weight of our issues, it means more to me to be an unfiltered open and honest voice that's pushing for change, I hope you can all understand, plus it gives me back some time, which is a relief (so I can focus on more consultations)

River levels in Oxfordshire

Many watercourses in Oxfordshire continue to be at a higher level than usual. We're continuing to keep our [flood advice page](#) updated with the latest advice for residents. On that subject I did 'wade' into the issue at Mellors Garage, supporting some of the district councillors with the lack of action by OCC, with rather a long email of concern, and have been pushing again today on action needed urgently as this is effecting our residents too with the Faringdon Bus service and I am concerned about when schools resume next week, as we have children at Faringdon schools!

GWP Healthcare

I have been speaking with the Clerk at Western Vale, as I know several parishes are concerned about knock on impacts of the overly subscribed services, and we hope to request a formal meeting of Parish Clerks and Chairs, NHS commissioning officers, Vale and County officers and cabinet leads, as well as district / county councillors. We need answers, as the timeline is taking too long, the BOB ICB need to explain what the delays are, as do Woodlands who have taken on the contract, who will also be invited, more info soon.

SEND

Priority action plan published to improve SEND services

In December, OCC published the local area partnership priority action plan to improve services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The plan responds to Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission's inspection report of SEND partnership services in July. Read our news article for more [information](#).

You will see from my letter to the CEO, I am far from impressed, nor do I think the administration are taking this seriously enough at any level, despite there now being a 'SEND Cabinet Lead', who should really be setting a tone of collaborative working and restorative practice.

SESRO

See attached letters which my motion called for...and I am aware GARD has called for a Public Enquiry too.

Please can you share the below with your residents....

Help Oxfordshire stand out from the crowd

We want Oxfordshire to stand out as a place to live, work, visit and do business.

Together with partners, we've commissioned thinking place to help tell Oxfordshire's story. Residents can get involved by completing the short online survey, which is open until 31 December. You can also join one of our 90 minutes online workshops on the following dates:

Tuesday 9 January 2024, 9.30am - 11am

Thursday 11 January 2024, 12pm - 1.30pm

Wednesday 17 January 2024, 5.30pm - 7pm.

Register your attendance [online](#) and you'll be sent full details.

Live consultations

We're currently running three major resident consultations:

- budget themselves using [our new simulator tool](#).
- can have their say until 26 January 2024.
- consultationforadmissions@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

For a full list of all resident consultations, [visit Let's talk Oxfordshire](#). Please contact

consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk with any queries.

E-mails To / From D Johnson

Dear David

Thanks for your reply, although I am not sure what action YOU are taking on behalf of constituents right NOW?

Your residents / constituents would like a public meeting, as per my letter, can we arrange this ASAP? I am sure the Clerk of Steventon Parish Council can assist us, and if the hall is booked, the other surrounding parishes would help accommodate? We need a constructive game plan, together, of everyone at all levels of local government, and national, to make a plan on how voices can be heard and proper scrutiny of the plans are carried out.

Given the past tense on PMQ then we are now a whole year into a new PM and its all very quiet, despite the consultations and push increasing week by week. It was very clear from the recent Thames Water 'engagement' that Thames Water (TW) plan to go for DCO, and yet I am outraged that no consultation to date has ever mentioned the actual size they now publicise and the open questions councils, councillors and the public / groups have on the table.

Flying over the size of the reservoir isn't sitting down at a public meeting with residents who want to know how we can all work together to get something done / to be truly listened too. I don't know where your surgeries are, but maybe its time for some on the doorstep of the site in East Hanney and Steventon, in fact latest designs have shifted the concern even more so to East Hanney.

From your bullet point list, there's very little on there we haven't ALL done / tried / been a part of, except you have the chamber of the house, the cabinet and the Prime Minister at your network level, we don't, and I am making a plea, as per my letter, on behalf of my residents for a meeting with the new Environment Minister, a round table of constructive points around WRSE / TWMP and unanswered questions. The OFWAT RAPID next gate should not be opened to SESRO until questions are answered.

This week there are motions at both OCC and VOWHDC on SESRO, and once again we will hear the main sticking points, and we need you to help David, please.

Can we please get a meeting in the diary?

Sally

Cllr Sally Povolotsky FRSA (She / Her)

County Councillor for Hendreds & Harwell Division

From: JOHNSTON, David <david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk>

Sent: Friday, December 8, 2023 11:11 AM

To: Cllr Sally Povolotsky <Sally.Povolotsky@Oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: SESRO - Official Letter Cllr Povolotsky

Dear Cllr Povolotsky,

Thank you for your letter.

I have already raised these points and registered the issues of public concern with the Secretary of State, Water Minister, Environment Agency, and Thames Water. Indeed, I have been liaising closely with GARD throughout my time as an MP regarding this, meeting with them several occasions to hear their concerns and have assisted them with virtually all of their requests including raising their concerns with Ministers, Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Ofwat as well as securing meetings for them to raise these concerns directly. I have also met with Thames Water on several occasions this year to discuss it, as well as the Chair of the WRSE.

I always listen to residents' concerns and have replied to over 250 emails on this subject in the past year alone – and have put these concerns to Thames Water, DEFRA, and the Environment Agency as a result. I also engage with constituents on this across various surgery appointments and visits and have visited the site of the proposed reservoir with constituents on several occasions to hear local concerns, including just the other month where I literally got a birds-eye view by flying in a plane over the site. If anyone would like to discuss this with me, they need only email - and they do.

I will continue to represent my constituents and have written to the Secretary of State regarding the date of the decision.

For reference as you have seemed confused on this point, I have written below a list of some of the actions that I have taken to represent my constituents on this:

- Raised constituent concerns in the House of Commons with the then Prime Minister in Prime Ministers Questions
- Raised constituent concerns in the House of Commons with the Environment Minister – criticising Thames Water, Ofwat and RAPID
- Wrote to the Environment Secretary to raise constituent concerns with them about the Draft Water Resources Management Plan and issues GARD had raised
- Wrote to the Water Minister to raise constituent concerns with them

- Met with GARD on several occasions to hear their concerns and assisted them with virtually all of their requests including raising their concerns with Ministers, Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Ofwat as well as securing meetings for them to raise these concerns directly
- Pressed Thames Water and WRSE on transparency issues around their consultations which successfully resolved them, from their consultations not being as accessible as they could be to redacted figures being used in them – also writing to the Water Minister about this
- Secured GARD a meeting with the Environment Agency and requested another for them with their Reservoir Safety team
- Met with senior management at Thames Water on several occasions to raise issues with them, including with their Water Resources Engagement Lead and Director for the Strategic Water Resource Options – and met with them again in October to discuss the Draft Water Resources Management Plan
- Met with WRSE to raise issues with them, including meeting with the Chair of the WRSE
- Wrote to the Environment Agency to raise constituent concerns with them
- Wrote to Ofwat to raise constituent concerns with them
- Responded to all the consultations run by Thames Water and WRSE on behalf of constituents
- Consistently pushed for alternative measures to be considered including the Severn to Thames transfer across various consultations and correspondence
- Replied to over 250 emails from constituents on this just this year - engaging with them and raising their concerns
- Engaged with constituents on this across various surgery appointments and visits - as well as visiting the site of the proposed reservoir with constituents on several occasions to hear local concerns, including just the other month

Yours,

David

If you are a constituent, sign up for my newsletter [here](#)

David Johnston OBE MP

Member of Parliament for Wantage and Didcot

From: Cllr Sally Povolotsky <Sally.Povolotsky@Oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 28 November 2023 19:44

To: JOHNSTON, David <david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk>

Cc: steventonpc@tiscali.co.uk; Derek Stork <gard.chair@gmail.com>; director@cpreoxon.org.uk; parishclerk@hendred.org; clerk@harwellparish.co.uk; Cooke, Andy <Andy.Cooke@whitehorsedc.gov.uk>; Robert.Clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk; Jill.Rayner@whitehorsedc.gov.uk; Cllr Pete Sudbury <Pete.Sudbury@Oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Subject: SESRO - Official Letter Cllr Povolotsky

Importance: High

Dear David

Please find attached the letter I am writing on behalf of my Division and I have copied in those who have asked me to write to you / are aware of my writing officially.

I wont be publishing this to social media, and respect your response to a difficult situation.

I do hope we can hear from you soon, the clock is ticking

Kind regards

Sally

Cllr Sally Povolotsky FRSA (She / Her)

County Councillor for Hendreds & Harwell Division

Sent by email 19.12.23

Bill Cotton

Director of Highways

Oxfordshire County Council

Subject: Ongoing Disruption and Lack of Action at Challow by Mellors Garage

Photographs attached from 19th December circa 6pm with Earline Truck and 2pm day time image (sent to me by local residents)

Dear Bill,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the ongoing disruption at Challow by Mellors Garage and the lack of action taken to address this issue. The impact on surrounding villages, market towns, and public transport disruption has reached a critical level, affecting thousands of residents on an hourly basis, furthermore impacting surrounding villages like Childrey which are not able to cope with redirected traffic, especially heavy goods, around narrow village lanes and streets. The locality has all areas impacted from my division to Wantage and leading to and from Faringdon.

It is disheartening to note that this issue, which has been known for years, has been allowed to worsen without any remedy in sight or planned works / maintenance of the ditches. Local residents have been patiently waiting for a quick resolution, but the sudden change in messaging in the last 24 hours from "it will get sorted" to "it needs to wait until January" has left everyone feeling frustrated and neglected. I was alerted to the issue last Tuesday and spoke to a fair few officers, finally Matthew Timms called me on Thursday and said the road was being closed and immediate plans afoot, but here I am 5 days later penning this note, and nothing has changed.

The unsafe and unmanned / controlled road closures have not only caused inconvenience but also pose a significant risk to public safety. The lack of suitable alternative routes and proper traffic management has led to chaotic situations, making it difficult for residents to commute and for businesses to operate smoothly. This disruption has not only impacted the residents of Challow but has also had a ripple effect on the surrounding villages and market towns.

Moreover, the public transport disruption caused by the ongoing roadworks has further exacerbated the situation. Many individuals rely on public transportation for their daily commute, and the disruption has left them stranded and unable to reach their destinations or places of employment on time, this also impacted children and school buses. This not only affects their personal lives but also has a negative impact on the local economy. This is further exasperated by the local businesses in the locality of the incident, including a physiotherapist centre, who have been adversely and continually affected as has the Petrol station, many of whom I know have been in touch with officers, this has now been going on for well over a week this time (which of course isn't the first time).

We all understand that infrastructure projects and repairs take time, but the lack of transparency and effective communication from the authority has only added to frustrations. Residents deserve answers, but more importantly, they deserve swift and decisive action to alleviate the ongoing disruption and ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out as soon as possible, delays are no longer acceptable and there must be a way around any issues with contractors, like finding other contractors who can do something - now. My other concern is locals taking actions into their own hands, and any resulting issues caused by that, which the growing facebook group, merely a week or so old, now has over 2000 users and an increasing undertone of 'we just sort this ourselves'. Its been covered on TV and local newspapers in the last few days.

I kindly request that this matter in Challow is of utmost priority and immediate action is put into place to rectify the situation, especially the road closure which is being ignored and lives / vehicles / safety at risk, as well as keeping all the local councillors in the loop. I urge you to provide regular updates to the affected communities, and a pop up public meeting with the parish, explaining the reasons for the delay and outlining a concrete plan to resolve the ongoing disruption, I have copied in the local district councillor as it comes under Cllr Constance's division (who is still in hospital I believe), Cllr Snowdon has asked to be kept in the loop.

I trust that you will take the necessary steps to resolve this matter at the earliest opportunity as every minute risks someone's safety especially in the dark.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I, and I am sure those cc'd in, look forward to receiving a prompt response detailing the actions that will be taken to address the ongoing safety concerns, disruption and provide relief to the affected communities to all of us in the locality group.

Yours sincerely,

Sally

Cllr Sally Povolotsky FRSA (She / Her)

Chair of Faringdon and Wantage Locality Group

County Councillor for Hendreds & Harwell Division

Further pdf's appended.

- 22122023 Letter from Cllr Leffman Leader of Oxfordshire County Council re SESRO
- 22122023 Letter to the Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Letter MReeves191223SENDPAP
- Letter to EA from OCC Nov 2023
- OCC Letter (Cllr Povolotsky) NOV 2023 to DJ MP

**Monday 8th January, 2024**

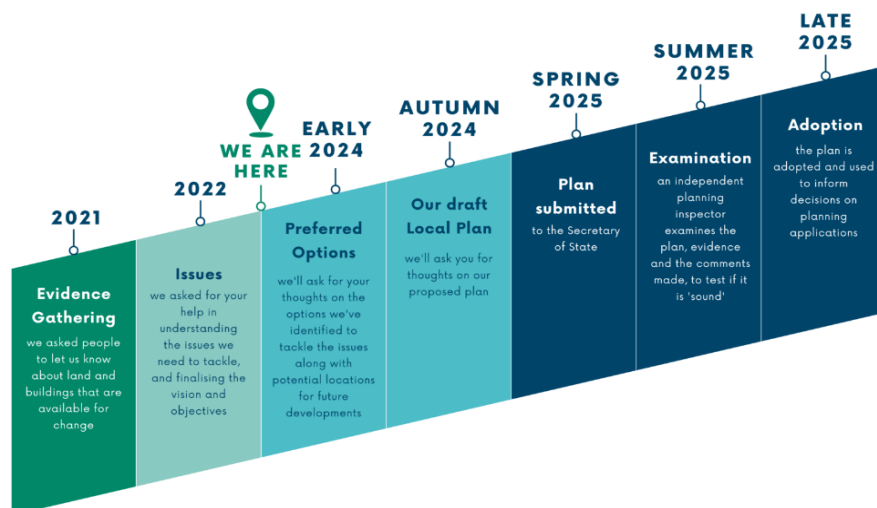
Monthly Parish Update

Vale of White Horse District Councillors

Cllr Hayleigh Gascoigne and**Cllr Debra Dewhurst**

Hello from Hayleigh and Debra

Happy New Year! January will be a busy month for the district council. From the 10th January you will be able to comment on the 'preferred options' of the Joint Local Plan (JLP) that the Vale of White Horse District Council have been working on together with South Oxfordshire District Council. The JLP will set out the kinds of new housing and jobs needed and where they should go. It will inform planning application decisions for the districts. It will also have policies to help address the climate emergency, restore nature and meet the needs of residents, such as delivering genuinely affordable low-carbon homes with the right infrastructure to go with it. The figure below shows where we are in the process of developing the JLP.



Now we need your input again. From the 10th January there are two ways to read the current version of the JLP (the preferred options) and make your comments: for a detailed look at the plan go to <https://jlp.southandvale.gov.uk/> or for a briefer look go to "JLP in a Nutshell" at <https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/>. For Parish Councils we recommend the first link.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions for us as councillors, please do email us. As a reminder, council meetings are held in public and if you wish to address council or committee, you can contact Democratic Services ahead of time. If you need more guidance on this, please let us know!

We use these monthly updates to keep you updated on our activities and general council news. We also post on our councillor Facebook Pages:

www.facebook.com/CllrHayleigh & www.facebook.com/Debra4BlewburyAndHarwell

Please get in touch with any issues or concerns via email

hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk and debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Community Support

Community Hub

The Hub can offer support and direct people to help on a range of things including Cost of Living, food support, etc. If you are struggling financially or just finding life difficult, the community hub can help. Whether it's practical support or just advice, please get in touch:

- **Call:** 01235 422600
- **Email:** communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

The office hours are 8.30am - 5pm Mon to Thurs, 8.30am-4.30pm on Fri (and closed on bank holidays).

Flooding

The main helpline for people to call for advice, guidance and support related to flooding is: 0345 988 1188.

This is the Environment Agency's 24/7 flooding support line.

If it's an emergency and somebody is in danger, residents should **call 999**.

Full details of flooding advice and guidance:

- [The county council's regularly updated flooding information page](#) – this contains all the links and advice residents should need.
- [The county council's Flooding Toolkit](#) (which our districts part-funded)
 - [What to do if you're flooding](#)
- The Environment Agency's flooding helpline (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
 - Telephone: 0345 988 1188
 - Textphone: 0345 602 6340
- If it's a flooding emergency you should focus on the safety of yourself and your family. **Dial 999 if it is an emergency** and you or someone else is in danger.

Avoid driving through flood water and avoid towpaths. Flood water is not clean and not suitable for children to play in. There might be hidden hazards under the water such as manhole covers that have lifted. Anyone who has been in flood water should wash their hands at the soonest opportunity.

Flood Warnings

Use this website to find the latest on flood warnings in the local area.

[Check for flooding in England - GOV.UK \(check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk\)](https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk)

White Horse Community Lottery

Our White Horse Community Lottery provides local organisations and charities with vital funding to be able to continue to support our communities and make a positive difference in our district.

Local voluntary groups and charities can register free of charge! Look out too for regular prizes shared on our social media.

How it works

Tickets cost just £1 and players can choose which local good cause(s) they want to support when they purchase tickets. Prizes range from free prize draw entries to a £25,000 jackpot.

[To buy your tickets just head to the official website for the White Horse Community Lottery](#) – Good Luck!

From every £1 ticket sold

- 50p goes to registered good causes and 10p into a general fund, known as the White Horse Community Fund, which supports the voluntary sector in Vale of White Horse
- 20p to the prize fund
- 17p to Gatherwell, the external lottery management operator that runs the lottery on our behalf
- 3p to VAT

[Find out more about the community lottery on our website](#)

Local News

Valley Park Update

This section of our report provides an overview of the current live planning applications for Valley Park. There are often several live applications relating to the development, however those labelled 'RM' i.e. 'Reserved Matters' are typically the most noteworthy as they request planning permission for specific parcels of housing on the development. Residents and parish councils can provide comments on these applications during the consultation period. Officers look at these comments and (where considered relevant to planning matters) seek to address them with the developers. Applications labelled as 'DIS' i.e. 'Discharge' relate to specific conditions from the outline planning permission and are not usually open for public consultation. The current live planning applications for Valley Park are listed below along with an update on the status of each provided by the Vale planning officers.

With recent extreme weather events, local residents are understandably concerned about the impact more homes has on the ability of the surrounding area to cope. The Environment Agency is a consultee for planning applications and as such issues advice on flooding matters. As you can see from this current round of applications, P22/V2744/RM has been delayed for a considerable amount of time, in part due to its location in a flood zone 1.

Application Decided

P23/V2247/DIS – application seeking approval of water course crossings – condition 28 of the outline planning permission

Refused. The details are considered adversely harmful to the watercourse banks, stream bed and a barrier to the movement of wildlife along the water course corridors.

Applications Under Consideration

P22/V2744/RM – 246 dwellings – Taylor Wimpey first housing parcel

As mentioned previously, parts of this parcel of land are in flood zones 2 and 3 and therefore, could be susceptible to fluvial flooding. Condition 36 of the outline planning permission excludes built development from flood zones 2 and 3 but the plans show housing in these areas which is not acceptable. Taylor Wimpey submitted flood modelling to the Environment Agency in September 2023 seeking to demonstrate that flooding is not an issue on site and that the Environment Agency's flood maps should be revised to categorise the site as flood zone 1 which is an acceptable location for housing. The Environment Agency did not accept the flood modelling and Taylor Wimpey has now submitted further flood modelling to the Environment Agency and their response is still awaited.

Meanwhile, Taylor Wimpey submitted further revised plans in December seeking to address previous comments raised by officers. We have responded to those revisions and await Taylor Wimpey's reply.

P22/V0604/RM – infrastructure for Persimmon and Taylor Wimpey first housing parcels

Amended plans received on 1 December were added to the file and consultation undertaken including with Western Valley and Harwell Parish Councils who have responded (no objection from Western Valley; an objection from Harwell on grounds of development in the flood plain). The revisions and all consultation responses need to be reviewed and considered by officers.

P22/V2624/DIS – approval of details reserved by conditions 23 and 24 (surface and foul water drainage) of the outline planning permission

No change - This application has not progressed since previous updates i.e. we have requested cross sections for the proposed swales and attenuation basins and asked the applicant to address the Vale drainage engineer comments together with demonstrating that the drainage scheme can be accommodated with other proposed infrastructure e.g. footways and cycle ways and meet the Strategic Design Code expectations. This application is also held up as it overlaps with the two RM applications above.

P23/V0659/DIS – approval of details reserved by condition 33 (Travel Plan) of the outline planning permission

Officers understand that the developers have approached OCC directly to discuss the content of the travel plan and we expect a revised travel plan submission once those discussions are concluded.

New Applications**P23/V2835/NM – revision to condition 10 (framework plan) of the outline planning permission**

The application seeks to add the words highlighted below to the condition so that it reads:

*“With the exception of the access works and associated infrastructure, **foul pumping station(s), electricity sub stations, telecommunication cabinets** and primary streets as defined on the illustrative access and movement plan no development shall be commenced, or any reserved matters application approved in a Framework Plan Area identified in condition 9 until the Framework Plan covering that area has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Each Framework Plan shall include the details of: a) Permeability and road hierarchy (including location of key secondary roads); b) Public transport accessibility (including bus routes and bus stop locations); c) Location of residential built development; d) Location of community infrastructure (details of which are to be provided in Development Briefs in accordance with Condition 8); e) Guidance on scale, materials, building heights/ lines/ layout and features; f) Parking strategies including on plot and visitor parking; g) Integration of foul water pumping station(s), electricity sub stations and telecommunication cabinets. The details in reserved matters applications shall be substantially in accordance with the approved Framework Plans.”*

P23/V2664/DIS – approval of details reserved by condition 10 (framework plan) of the outline planning permission

This application seems to revise the currently approved Framework Plan covering Taylor Wimpey's first housing parcel, to reflect their current reserved matters application submission (application P22/V2744/RM). Officers need to review the application.

P23/V2813/DIS - approval of details reserved by condition 3 (ecological construction management plan (ECMP)) of the reserved matters approval under application P23/V0667/RM

Condition 3 was imposed as the ECMP submitted with application P23/V0667/RM did not include contact details for a project manager, site manager and ecological clerk of works. These details have now been added.

Climate & Environment News**Successful residential waste collection contract extended**

One of the country's most successful residential waste collection contracts has been extended this month. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils announced an agreement today, to extend their joint contract with waste contractor, Biffa, for two more years.

Council News**December's Full Council meeting**

In its last full meeting of the year, council debated significant points of interest to the district and its future, with a motion restating the Vale's opposition to the proposed reservoir, SESRO. It also considered the upcoming consultation to the council's forthcoming joint local plan and its future commitment to climate action and nature recovery.

Vale of White Horse District Council met on Wednesday 13 December and also considered matters relating to the upcoming budget setting process, due to be finalised in the new year. The council is proud of its record to manage its finances and continues to seek to find a balance between its strong financial position and assessing the needs of its most vulnerable residents, in its council tax reduction scheme for 2024/2025.

Council considered **two motions**. Both motions were agreed.

You can [find all the details of the meeting here](#). You can also view details the [questions to council here](#).

Highlights

Motion opposing Thames Water's Proposed Reservoir: The first motion noted the council's concerns around the Southeast Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) set out in the draft regional plan by Thames Water. The council's resolutions included to request a meeting with the current Secretary of State alongside a call for the SESRO approval processes to be paused. Proposer Cllr Robert Clegg-; Seconded – Cllr Andy Cooke

Motion affirming the Council's Commitment to Nature Recovery: The second motion focussed on action on the crisis in nature and our commitment to nature recovery. The council acknowledged the importance of biodiversity and nature and resolved to ensure both were given equal priority with climate change within planning policies and design guides and the new corporate plan. Proposer – Cllr Sarah James; Seconded – Cllr Katherine Foxhall

Unanimous approval of Chilton Parish Council's S106 Request: The council unanimously approved a request for S106 funding for play area/recreation improvements, including accessible equipment for children of all abilities – this is a part of continual commitment of VoWHDC to provide accessible equipment for play areas in the district.

[Have your say on a new political map for Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

The Local Government Boundary Commission wants to hear what residents and organisations think about their local area. The Commission is the independent body that draws these boundaries. It is reviewing Vale of White Horse to make sure councillors represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements help the council work effectively. It wants to be sure that its proposals reflect community ties and identities.

[Action on anti-social behaviour in Wantage](#)

Vale of White Horse District Council has taken steps to tackle a rise in anti-social behaviour in an area of Wantage. Earlier this year, residents and shoppers raised concerns over issues at Mill Street carpark. Known locally as 'The Undercroft', the site was in danger of becoming a hotspot for anti-social behaviour with an increase in reports of unwanted gatherings, littering, graffiti and drug activity. Following an inspection of the area, officers from Vale of White Horse District Council, Thames Valley Police and Oxford City Council identified a series of measures to improve safety and deter further anti-social behaviour from happening.

[The Beacon bounces into spring](#)

Off the back of a busy autumn season, The Beacon has launched its new shows and classes for spring 2024. There are some great shows coming up, including The Jive Aces in January, Dinosaur Adventure Live in February half term, monthly Open Mic Nights and Matt Richardson is back with his Laughing Ox comedy night! There's more info [on the Beacon website](#).

[A statement from Cllr Bethia Thomas, Leader of the Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

"It's been another busy year for us all and I am aware that everyone at the council has been doing their utmost to manage the challenges we face in delivering all that we can for the residents of our district. Looking back, it is clear we have achieved a great deal. The cost-of-living crisis has set many families back in the last few years and our Community Hub has done a fantastic job to help residents with cost-of-living concerns. Speaking with people at local events I have been able to spread the word of what we are able to offer, and our grants team have also been on hand to give advice on our services and available grants including two schemes to help support district's food banks and community larders."

[Follow the link](#) or head to the Vale website to see the full End of Year statement from Leader of the Vale of White Horse District Council, Cllr Bethia Thomas.

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee
of the Western Valley Parish Council**

**Thursday 28th September 2023 at 19:45, The District Centre, 1 Gentian Mews, Great Western Park, OX11
6GR**

Members Present:

Chair	Cllr A Dearlove (AD)
Members	Cllr A Thompson (AT)
	Cllr T Williams (TW) [Substitute Member]

Officers Present:

Clerk to the Council	Mrs L White (LW)
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Public and Press: None.

Meeting Started **19:47**

23.07.1. Apologies & Substitutions [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

23.07.1.1. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Cllrs, L Durman; V Humphries & P Knowles.

23.07.1.2. To record councillor substitutions, allowed under the terms of reference of this committee.

Cllr T Williams attended as a substitute member to ensure the quorum of three was met.

23.07.2. Declarations of Interests [LA 2011 s31]

23.07.2.1. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda

None.

23.07.2.2. To consider requests for Dispensations [LA 2011 s33]

None.

23.07.3. To approve the minutes of previous meetings [LA 1972 Sch 12. Para 41(1)]

23.07.3.1. Meeting of 24th August 2023

If was agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed.

Western Valley Parish Council

Appendix C

23.07.4. To consider applications and approve response to planning authority.

23.07.4.1. P23/V2012/CM - Land between A34 Milton Interchange and B4015 north of Clifton Hampden Oxfordshire

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Section 77 and Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000 Application by Oxfordshire County Council Planning Application for the dualling of the A4130 carriageway, construction of the Didcot Science Bridge, road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames and associated works between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire; R3.0138/21 Consultation end date: 4th October 2023

A proposed response had been drafted in advance of the meeting, and was circulated. Amendments to the response were discussed in the meeting.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to send response as below.

Leanne Palmer
The Planning Inspectorate
3rd Floor Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Western Valley Parish Council
PO Box 4311
READING
RG8 1DD

28th September 2023

Dear Ms Palmer

RE: Appeal Reference: APP/U3100/V/23/3326625 Planning Application for the dualling of the A4130 carriageway, construction of the Didcot Science Bridge, road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames and associated works between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire; R3.0138/21 Site Address: Land between A34 Milton Interchange, and B4015 north of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire

We make this representation to you, as a newly formed parish council (1st April 2023) who was unable to make representation to the original application as we had not yet been formed. This is our first representation regarding this application which directly affects all our residents as it passes along the northern boundary of our parish, the main trunk-road out of our parish.

This Parish Council fully supports this application and asks that the Planning Inspectorate approve the scheme. Our reasons for supporting include:

- The planning officer recommended to the planning committee that this application be approved.
- It supports growth identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2.

Cllr A Dearlove
Chair of the Committee

23 November 2023

- Upcoming development throughout our parish and greater use of electric vehicles increasing traffic.
- Reduce the environmental impact of traffic jams and congestion.
- Inadequacies of Local Rail services.

Additional details on each are detailed below.

Planning Officers Recommendation

Summary from the officers report:

The application has been considered against the development plan, taking account of material considerations including statutory and non-statutory consultation responses and public representations. It is recommended that, subject to the application first being referred to the Secretary of State to consider whether he wishes to call it in for his own determination and to conditions to be determined by the Director of Planning, Environment and Climate Change, including those listed in Annex 1, the application is approved.

Growth

The infrastructure will assist in delivering the housing and employment growth identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2. Without this proposed infrastructure planned new growth is unlikely to be delivered. A number of the parcels of the Valley Park development have already had their planning applications submitted. The dualling of the A4130 will have a material difference to travelling times to the residents of this new development as well as the already occupied Great Western Park, which exits on to this road. It is already well documented that the A4130 is already “at capacity” it cannot accept any further travellers without increasing wait times and delays, yet additional developments with associated vehicles are being approved.

Yes we wish to encourage people to use cycles, buses etc but the homes in this parish are far from the town centre and to be able to go to the major local supermarkets, cars are needed. Tradespeople need vans for equipment etc, and the old power station site will continue to be developed for more distribution centres etc. The A4130 is already at capacity and there is yet more development to be completed The Harwell bypass helped a lot more people get there. This scheme was to increase capacity in to Culham and Oxford.

Those moving to the new development will need to work, Culham is a prime employment centre and people will need to get there. We know currently there is a very limited service to Culham on trains, driving will need to be a primary mode of transport for some of these workers.

The scheme has very good cycle infrastructure, we would ask that should this application be approved, the connectivity to the current cycle infrastructure be improved.

Electric Vehicle Use

There is a certain amount of guilt associated with using traditional combustion engines. However there are no sizable supermarkets within our Parish. As such, people must travel to get their shopping and other items. As the government's ban on selling new cars powered by internal combustion engines from 2035 is brought in and more residents have electric vehicles, the guilt around travelling and extra journeys will ebb away, as people use the more "greener & guilt free" electric vehicles, adding to more journeys on this already at capacity road.

Environmental Factors

The HIF1 project will reduce travel through villages, improving air quality and reducing noise in surrounding areas. Increasing the capacity of the road will reduce the amount of waiting in congestion with engines on and people trying to take short cuts through local villages on road unsuitable for larger vehicles. As a Parish Council we acknowledge this scheme will have an environmental impact, however we believe that the benefits to the community of implementing this scheme, outweigh the potential environmental harm.

Local Rail Services

Travelling by train can be more expensive than running for example an electric car. The new train station idea for Grove is unlikely in the short term combined with Culham station not being able to be expanded.

We thank you for your consideration on this matter.

23.07.5. To note planning authority decisions

All of the below were noted.

23.07.5.1. P23/V1024/FUL - Alma Barn, Didcot Road, Harwell, Didcot, OX11 6DN - **GRANTED**

Erection of 9 dwellings and associated works and operations.

23.07.5.2. P23/V1480/S73 - Former site of Long Reach, Didcot Road, Harwell, Didcot, OX11 6DW - **GRANTED**

Variation of Condition 1 (approved plans) on application P18/V0112/RM - PV Panels to be added to the dwellings, brickwork changed and windows reduced in size on Plot 9 and 10.

WVPC Response: NO OBJECTIONS

23.07.6. Matters for future discussion.

None.

Western Valley Parish Council

Appendix C

23.07.7. To confirm the date of the next meeting – 26th October 2023.

Confirmed.

There being no further business to be transacted the Chairman closed the meeting at **20:13**

Appendix E

Title	Finance 2023-2024
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 11 th January 2024

7.1. To approve payments list for January 2024

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
55	13/02/2024				PAYE Deductions	HMRC
57	15/01/2024	£307.50	£0.00	£307.50	Meeting Room Hire	Vale of White Horse District Council
56	15/01/2024	£9.99	£1.99	£11.98	Hosting	Cloud Next Ltd
54	15/01/2024	£10.30	£2.06	£12.36	Microsoft 365	Microsoft Ireland Operations Ltd
53	15/01/2024	£26.00	£0.00	£26.00	WFH Allowance	Laura White
52	15/01/2024				Salary	Laura White
51	31/12/2023	£12.52	£0.00	£12.52	Bank Fees	Unity Trust
		£555.41	£4.05	£559.46		

7.2. To note receipts, year to 31st December 2023

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Cashed Date	Description	Customer
4	31/12/2023	£39.08		£39.08	31/12/2023	Bank Interest	Unity Trust
		£39.08		£39.08			

7.3. To note the reconciled bank account and reserves balances as at 31st December 2023

A	Bank Reconciliation at 31/12/2023		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2023 - 31/12/2023		70,727.08
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2023 - 31/12/2023		10,289.37
	Cash in Hand 31/12/2023 (per Cash Book)		60,437.71
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/12/2023	0.00	
	Unity Trust Reserve 31/12/2023	37,085.08	
	Unity Trust Current 31/12/2023	23,352.63	
			60,437.71
	Less unrepresented payments		
			60,437.71
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
			60,437.71
	Adjusted Bank Balance		60,437.71
	A = B Checks out OK		

Current Account Balance: £ 23,352.63

Reserve Account Balance: £ 37,085.08

7.4. To complete the quarterly budget review and approve virements.

To approve what to do with bank interest – Cost Code 1060.

Appendix E

FY 2023-2024 - Review as of 31st December					
	Receipts		Payments		
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	
1000	INCOME / RECEIPTS				
1010	Precept	50188.00	50188.00		
1020	Grants (Transfer of funds from Harwell PC)	22500.00	20500.00	500	500
1030	CIL	0.00			
1040	Allotment Fees	0.00			
1050	Grass Cutting Contribution	0.00			
1060	Interest	160.00	39.08		
	£ 72,848.00	£ 70,688.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	
	EXPENDITURE / PAYMENTS				
3000	ADMINISTRATION				
3010	Audit Costs		1000.00		
3020	Bank Charges		60.00	12.52	
3030	Chairman's Allowance		350.00		
3040	Elections		600.00	400.00	
3050	Expenses - WFH		312.00	130.00	
3060	Expenses - Stationary		500.00	425.24	
3070	Hall Hire		675.00	674.50	
3080	Insurance		320.00	319.82	
3090	IT Support & Software		1000.00	698.20	
3100	Office Equipment		3000.00	1306.48	
3110	Staff Costs (All Staff & HMRC)		8000.00	2747.14	
3020	Subscriptions (OALC, SLCC)		1000.00	828.18	
3030	Training		4000.00	849.00	
3040	Website		1000.00	600.96	
	£ -	£ -	£ 21,817.00	£ 8,992.04	
4000	ALLOTMENTS				
4010	Set-up		5000.00		
4020	Water - Allotments		500.00		
	£ -	£ -	£ 5,500.00	£ -	
5000	OTHER PROJECTS & GRANTS				
5010	Grants (Including S137)		1000.00	50.00	
5020	In year projects, undefined		5000.00	23.67	
	£ -	£ -	£ 6,000.00	£ 73.67	
	£ 72,848.00	£ 70,688.00	£ 33,817.00	£ 9,565.71	

Surplus (Ignore CIL) **£ 39,031.00** <-TRANSFER TO EMR

To allocate **£ 1,825.00**

Appendix E

Earmarked Reserves

	Start of Year	Transfer	Planned Spend	Receipts	End of Year
Operating Reserve	£ -	£ 25,000.00			£ 25,000.00
S106 from Harwell		£ 407.00			£ 407.00
Community Infrastructure Levy	£ -				£ -
New Allotments Project	£ -	£ 11,639.00			£ 11,639.00
Training					
Parish Office - Project					
Burial Ground - Project					
Interest - Proposed Project?		£ 160.00			
	£ -	£ 37,206.00		£ -	£ 37,046.00

Title	Draft Oxfordshire Councils Charter
Authors	Clerk to the Council
Meeting	Western Valley Parish Council Meeting – 11 th January 2024

Q1 What is your role:

- Councillors
- Clerk

Q2 Which form(s) of local Authority are you a member of? (Please select all that apply)

- County Council
- District Council
- Town Council
- Parish Council
- Parish Meeting

Q3 Please tell us the name of the district(s), town(s) or parish(es) you are a member of: _____

Q4 If you are a member of a town and/or parish, please tell us which district this sits within

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

Charter aims

The Charter's aims represent our shared long-term goals. The Charter's performance will be measured against these over time.

- Stronger partnership working between Oxfordshire councils.

Taking a 'local government family' approach to place-shaping, service delivery and supporting the needs of our residents.

- Enhancing local democracy.

Doing our bit to encourage resident and community participation in local democracy at all levels.

Q5 Do you think that these aims reflect the needs of Oxfordshire councils?

- Yes
- Partly
- No
- Not Sure

Our shared principles

Our shared principles are the ‘golden thread’ of values that underpin how we aim to meet the charter’s commitments and achieve our strategic aims. These principles guide how we implement and integrate the charter, how we work together and how we treat each other.

You will have the opportunity to comment on each of the principles individually in the next few questions.

The shared principles are:

Mutual Respect

- Recognising and acknowledging our shared values and aims – to represent and deliver for our communities and residents.
- Treating each other with respect, civility, and dignity.
- Treating each council equitably and fairly, acting on good faith.
- Accommodating each council’s unique working practices, where practicable.
- Abiding by codes of conduct in demonstrating respect and civility.

Relationship Building

- Building constructive and collaborative relationships between councils, councillors, clerks, officers, partners, and communities.
- Addressing barriers to building effective relationships.
- Creating opportunities to build relationships and connections.

Transparency and Accountability

- Optimising information sharing and communication.
- Sharing best practice, information, data, and knowledge.
- Following-up on decision-making and explaining decisions to communities impacted by them.

Q6 Do you think these are the right principles for the Oxfordshire Councils Charter?

- Yes
- Partly
- No
- Not Sure

Q7 Would you like to comment on any of the individual principles

- Yes
- No

IF Yes:

Answer the following Questions (Next Page)

	Mutual Respect	Relationship Building	Transparency and Accountability
Do you think this principle reflects the needs of Oxfordshire councils?			
Yes			
Partly			
No			
Not Sure			
Do you think that anything about this principle should be added, removed or changed?			
Yes (Tell Us More)			
No			
Is there anything else you would like to tell us about this principle?			
Yes (Tell Us More)			
No			

Our shared commitments

These are our shared commitments to achieve our strategic aims. They are purposely kept at a high-level to enable each council to apply to their own priorities and ways of working individually, without creating an undue burden for councils with less resource and capacity.

You will have the opportunity to comment on each of the commitments individually in the next few questions.

The shared commitments are:

Communication

We will...

- Optimise how we communicate with each other.
- Communicate with respect and civility.
- Strive to communicate and explain decision-making.
- Communicate openly and transparently where it is appropriate to do so.

Consultation and Engagement

We will...

- Engage each other in our work as early as practicable, acknowledging the limitations and barriers of different stakeholders and communities.
- Strive to make consultation and engagement as accessible as possible.
- Consider each other in strategic decision making and future planning.
- Follow-up on consultations and feedback where possible.

Resources

We will...

- Share relevant and appropriate information to empower each other to best support our residents and communities.
- Optimise access and signposting to resources and practical support.
- Consider where resources and support can be effectively shared between councils to improve outcomes for residents.

Local Democracy

We will...

- Proactively work to empower our residents and communities to participate in local democracy.
- Take steps to engage young people to participate in our communities and local democracy.
- Centre our communities and residents in all that we do.
- Respect the democratic mandate of councillors at all levels.

Q19 Do you think these are the right commitments to include in the Charter?

- Yes
- Partly
- No
- Not Sure

Q20 Would you like to comment on any of the individual commitments?

- Yes
- No

IF Yes:

Answer the following Questions (Next Page)

	Communication	Consultation & Engagement	Resources	Local Democracy
Do you think this commitment reflects the needs of Oxfordshire councils?				
Yes				
Partly				
No				
Not Sure				
Do you think that anything about this commitment should be added, removed or changed?				
Yes (Tell Us More)				
No				
Is there anything else you would like to tell us about this commitment?				
Yes (Tell Us More)				
No				

Q28 Is there anything else you would like to say about the Draft Oxfordshire Councils Charter?

- Yes (Please tell us more _____)
- No

Oxfordshire Councils Charter

Introduction

This charter has been developed by a cross-council working group to set out a framework for better partnership working in Oxfordshire. The contents of the charter have been shaped by feedback from town and parish councils across the county.

Strategic Aims for the Charter

These aims represent our shared long-term goals. The charter's performance will be measured against these over time.

- 1) Stronger partnership working between Oxfordshire councils.**
 - Taking a 'local government family' approach to place-shaping, service delivery and supporting the needs of our residents.
- 2) Enhancing local democracy.**
 - Doing our bit to encourage resident and community participation in local democracy at all levels.

Our Shared Principles

Our shared principles are the 'golden thread' of values that underpin how we aim to meet the charter's commitments and achieve our strategic aims. These principles guide how we implement and integrate the charter, how we work together and how we treat each other.

Mutual Respect

- Recognising and acknowledging our shared values and aims – to represent and deliver for our communities and residents.
- Treating each other with respect, civility, and dignity.

- Treating each council equitably and fairly, acting on good faith.
- Accommodating each council's unique working practices, where practicable.
- Abiding by codes of conduct in demonstrating respect and civility.

Relationship Building

- Building constructive and collaborative relationships between councils, councillors, clerks, officers, partners, and communities.
- Addressing barriers to building effective relationships.
- Creating opportunities to build relationships and connections.

Transparency and Accountability

- Optimising information sharing and communication.
- Sharing best practice, information, data, and knowledge.
- Following-up on decision-making and explaining decisions to communities impacted by them.

Our Shared Commitments

These are our shared commitments to achieve our strategic aims: stronger partnership working and enhance local democracy. The themed commitments are purposely kept at a high-level to enable each council to apply to their own priorities and ways of working individually, without creating an undue burden for councils with less resource and capacity. The aim is to ensure that the commitments are achievable for all types and sizes of councils as it allows each council to interpret and aim for the commitments in line with their own resources, capacity, needs and priorities. The commitments will be underpinned and implemented through specific mutually agreed actions once the charter has been agreed.

Communication

We will...

- Optimise how we communicate with each other.
- Communicate with respect and civility.
- Strive to communicate and explain decision-making.
- Communicate openly and transparently where it is appropriate to do so.

Consultation and Engagement

We will...

- Engage each other in our work as early as practicable, acknowledging the limitations and barriers of different stakeholders and communities.
- Strive to make consultation and engagement as accessible as possible.
- Consider each other in strategic decision making and future planning.
- Follow-up on consultations and feedback where possible.

Resources

We will...

- Share relevant and appropriate information to empower each other to best support our residents and communities.
- Optimise access and signposting to resources and practical support.
- Consider where resources and support can be effectively shared between councils to improve outcomes for residents.

Local Democracy

We will...

- Proactively work to empower our residents and communities to participate in local democracy.
- Take steps to engage young people to participate in our communities and local democracy.
- Centre our communities and residents in all that we do.
- Respect the democratic mandate of councillors at all levels.

Implementation

Once the charter has been agreed at Cabinet and Executive level, all councils will be invited to be a signatory of the charter.

The intention is that the charter remains a living document, with the sign-off of the charter being very much the beginning and not the end-goal of this work.

Once the charter has been agreed and signed-off, the cross-council charter Working Group will work on an action plan to work towards the charter aims and commitments, as well as an approach to monitoring the performance and progress of the charter.