

Vale and South Oxfordshire Neighbouring Parish Councils Joint Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 19th May 2022 at 6:30pm

Present: Adrian Morris (Culham PC), Charlie Hopkins (CHp – Legal/ Planning Advisor), Chris Hancock (Appleford PC Working Group), Chris Neill (Burcot & Clifton Hampden PC), Greg O'Broin (Appleford PC), John Peters (Nuneham Courtenay PC), Robin Draper (SCA), Siobhan Sargeant (Culham PC), Vicky Shepherd (Appleford PC).

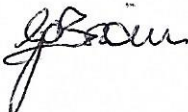
Guests: Cllr Duncan Enright (OxonCC Cabinet member), Stuart Scott-Ely (Berinsfield PC), Neil Fitzgerald (Stadhampton PC).

Apologies: Andrew Steele (Culham PC), Mandy Rigault (Nuneham Courtenay PC), Rita Atkinson (Sutton Courtenay PC), Sam Casey-Rerhaye (Culham PC). Also: Cllr Richard Webber (OxonCC & VoWHDC), Cllr Robin Bennett (OxonCC & SODC).

GOB welcomed the guests and made introductions. He thanked Cllr Duncan Enright for attending.

1. Update from Cllr Duncan Enright (DE) on HIF1

- a) Cllr Enright advised that CAG had met earlier (19/5/2022).
- b) OxonCC expects to arrive at a decision with Homes England on the HIF1 funding by mid-June 2022.
- c) OxonCC is continuing the preparation for Compulsory Purchase and Site orders and expects to discuss that in July 2022.
- d) The CAG is made up of local councillors to provide local input from the Didcot and surrounding areas.
- e) Cllr Enright is proposing a meeting in the 2nd half of June between CAG and representatives of Parish Councils (including NPC-JC) on site. He said Cllr Povolotsky suggested Steventon. GOB said the CAG membership seems to concentrate around Didcot.
- f) CAG intends is to look at the environmental credentials of the HIF1 road scheme to reduce the carbon impact. This might to achieved by using local sources of materials (e.g. aggregate). Road embankments could be covered by carbon sink material e.g. mosses. The cycle & pedestrian routes should be an exemplar resource.
- g) There is a need to use data models to address immediate development and long-term development.

Signed: 

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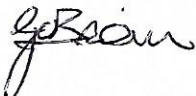
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- h) The planning of the route of the HIF1 road needs to be embedded into a Master Plan that contains area strategies under the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP 5). The plan will encompass the villages around Didcot.
- i) The impact of the road needs to be assessed. The HIF1 Road should not be a strategic route for regional freight traffic. This will be restricted to A34, A30, M40 & A4130. There should be measures in place to restrict freight to the local requirements, e.g. A4130 serving Didcot, A415 serving Culham Science Centre. There will be an HGV routing strategy enforcing a routing plan to restrict lorry routes.
- j) The impact of traffic on the historic Thames bridges needs to be assessed.
- k) Public Transport in Didcot and the surrounding villages to the north of Didcot needs to be reviewed, it is inadequate. There has been earlier discussion on light rail but Cllr DE thinks buses are a better option. Light rail and tram will not link with local towns & villages, nor does rail.
- l) Work has commenced on an Area Strategy for a Low Carbon Infrastructure for South Oxfordshire. Project leader is Harry Davis who worked on the development phase of the project and is familiar with local issues (and local parish councils).
- m) There is commitment to 20 mph zones to reduce speeding. This is proving to be very popular and there is a waiting list to join and participate in the scheme. Example of one town where previously speeds of 37-40 mph were common and this has reduced to 25/26 mph.

2. Open Discussion & Questions

The Chair opened the meeting for questions and comments.

- a) Siobhan Sargeant (CPC) – asked about noise, which is a particular issue in Culham.
- b) Chris Hancock (APC) – said the alternative options to an HIF1 road, such as bus network, Didcot Garden Line, A34 Park and Ride, and public transport elements had been summarily dismissed. He referenced the 2018 OAR (Option Assessment Report) prepared by OxonCC which dismissed many these and other solutions arbitrarily. The 2021 OAR followed suit. He

Signed: 

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(e) RD stated that Cllr Knight's presentation appeared to indicate a fact account albeit with minor amendments, despite the serious concerns expressed by NPC-JC & the failure of officers to respond to its

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suggested that more sustainable transport options now need to be considered.

c) GOB (APC) asked why rail was not utilised more. DE response was rail will not work!

d) Cllr Stuart Scott (BPC) requested firmer information on timescales.

Action: NPC-JC will collate questions to be sent to DE [All]

DE apologised that he had to go and left the meeting (7:05pm). The chairman thanked him for his time.

3. Minutes of last Meeting

The Chair advised that the minutes had been circulated and asked for approval.

RD (SCA) said he was concerned that Phase 2 was on hold and phase 2 work had progressed.

GOB said no work had been authorised or paid on Phase 2 but discussion on this could be expanded in item 7 (Administration).

The minutes were put to the meeting and approved.

4. Noise Report

The Noise Report had been circulated with little or no comment.

GOB said it was an excellent and very professional report while there was very useful material in it, he wished it was a little more robust. CH said professionals have to be objective and present their opinion on the facts.

C Hancock advised that he had prepared an objection statement, incorporating points in the professional report and being more critical of the HIF1 noise report. This objection had been circulated to NPC-JC for comment and would now be issued to OxonCC in the name of the JC.

CN (later in meeting) said he had used the material in this report which was better than another noise report CH and BPC had seen. It provided a good framework. GOB said Appleford had borrowed general concepts and used the same approach for a report on noise from Appleford Sidings.

Action:

Representatives to advise their Parish Council that the Noise Report has been approved and to seek necessary approvals for payment

Signed: *[Signature]*

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See Note
(e) inserted

to the NPC-JC paper to be provided ASAP.

And that an answer is provided to the long-standing so query on the

Appleford Rd would increase or decrease traffic through the village with the underlying data underlying etc.

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[All] – Invoice will be forwarded to the Clerk (GF) for payment who will seek relevant contribution from each Parish Council in due course.

5. Developments & Issues

a) Assessment of HIF1 update (Part 1)

Was discussed earlier.

b) Environment Agency Objection

There was a brief discussion and confirmation by CHp that the objection by the Environment Agency (EA) was significant. It is rare enough for the EA to be so critical and in this case, OxonCC will have to find alternative flood capacity (up or down stream) to compensate.

GOB said this will involve identifying land and CPO work. Also, the objection mentioned bio-diversity impact and the Otters!

c) Independent Third-Party Review

CHp said he had been pressing for this as a completed constituent part of the EIA. It had been denied on the basis it was still being worked on. GOB said he mentioned this at the Liaison Meeting (Commercial operators, OxonCC, SCPC & APC) and Cllr Webber said he would be asking for it.

CHp suggested we should try to get a copy of it from Cllr Webber or Cllr Bennett.

d) Regulation 25 request

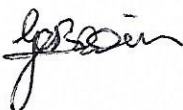
CHp indicated that OxonCC planning had issued a request to AECOM for further information for the EIA. This request has not included items requested earlier by CHp on behalf of the JC. A further request, to draw attention to the missing items, needs to be issued on behalf of the JC.

e) OxonCC Planning Portal (Consultation closed notice on planning website)

We have pointed out to OxonCC planning that this discourages public objections. CHp advised he had engaged with Emily Catcheside and OxonCC Legal. Their position is contrary to their obligations and the law.

f) Levelling up & Regeneration Bill – changes?

There was a brief discussion. CHp advised it will have an effect and will contain tighter regulation than was proposed but it is

Signed: 

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difficult to say what impact it will have until the bill is published and is passed into law.

6. Options & New Actions

a) Wider Campaign Options

RD argued that given the opposite intent of oxon to drive ahead with the current project + our limited resources to remain focused on HIF.

There was a discussion on holding a Charette or Seminar etc. JP (NCPC) suggested that OxonCC should finance a seminar on sustainable transport, possibly held at Oxford Brookes University. He suggested he and MR (NCPC) would be prepared to help organise it. *agreed and*

CN/said we need to focus on the main campaign and keep our efforts on that. CH acknowledged that but was of the view that it could facilitate a wider discussion among OxonCC councillors, residents, and the public on alternatives to the HIF1 road. GOB said that TAN recommended something like that which would be useful for fundraising and finding volunteers.

b) Complete the Objection Submission to OxonCC

CHp explained he has been compiling a draft interim objection. The question is do we wait for the Regulation 25 information or submit it now?

RD raised this is Phase 2 work (discussed later under item 7 Administration and Budget.

There was a consensus that this submission needs to be submitted now. Holding back until Regulation 25 information is supplied from AECOM would be working to an unknown timeframe.

Resolved that the Interim Objection with expert Reports should be completed as soon as possible.

Actions:

1. CHp to send the draft docs to GOB to circulate for comment [CHp & GOB]
2. Members to review and revert with comments [All]

7. Administration

a) NPCJC Agreement

NPCJC Agreement has been circulated for signature – was not discussed (carry forward).

Signed: *[Signature]*

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b) Budget / Costs Arising

GOB said he was not acting in the capacity of Financial Controller but to aid understanding of the financial status circulated a spreadsheet before the meeting. This shows spending of £4,500 on phase 1 plus WIP for the noise report (now approved) £950 (ex VAT). In total £5,450 for phase 1. In effect one-third of funds have been used.

Funds available to carry forward to Phase 2 – £9,550. The budget for legal / planning advice (CHp) of £2,250 with amounts for experts. GOB advised a contingency was available of circa £2k as Andrew Dorian was working on a pro bono basis. ^(*)

* RD expressed concern that the main issue had not been addressed & funds should be reserved to fulfill that brief.

CHp explained that he had expended somewhere approaching £20k at commercial rates which he was not proposing to charge. As he said at the last meeting, he would honour his quote £5,250 (of which he had been paid £3k).

There was general agreement that the interim objection which CHp had been compiling was Phase 2 and CN said he should be paid for it. CHp clarified he was looking for assurance he would be paid, otherwise he was working for nothing.

Resolved to instruct CHp to complete the Interim Objection and to circulate the document for comment prior to completion for submission to OxonCC. At which point he could raise an invoice.

RD said he could not authorise but would send his recommendation to accept to SCPC for approval.

Action:

GOB request all reps of Parishes to recommend approval at the earliest opportunity [ALL]

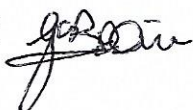
8. Any Other Business

CN ref to Noise report – item 4.

Neil Fitzgerald (SPC) said he had recently travelled one morning through villages close to the HIF road and was surprised at the volume of traffic encountered. He said bringing more traffic to the area was hardly the solution.

9. Next Meeting

TBA (meeting with CAG will inform likely date).

Signed: 

Date: 17 July 2022