

# Vale and South Oxfordshire Neighbouring Parish Councils Joint Committee

## Minutes of Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7pm

Present: Andrew Steele (Culham PC), Chris Hancock (Appleford PC Working Group), Chris Neill (Burcot & Clifton Hampden PC), Greg O'Broin (Appleford PC), Rita Atkinson (Sutton Courtenay PC), Sam Casey-Rerhaye (Culham PC).

Apologies: Geoffrey Ferres (Nuneham Courtenay PC/Clerk to the Joint Committee).

### **1. Minutes of last Meeting**

Item deferred.

### **2. Developments on HIF1 Application/Objection**

#### a) Updates (if any) to OxonCC Planning Portal?

Nothing posted since Traffic Modelling Audit Report 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

#### b) Status of Regulation 25 request

Still awaited.

RA suggested Sutton Courtenay might be able to ask one of its residents who has modelling experience, not traffic, to review the document.

GOB advised that Duncan Enright had confirmed at the recent OxonCC meeting that the HIF1 road would be considered at the Planning & Regulation Committee meeting on 28th November 2022.

Assuming only 28 days permitted for the public to review the Regulation 25 information, that will need to be made public by end October.

As this will be technically complex NPC-JC should write to OxonCC Planning to indicate that more time will be required to respond to new information.

RA reminded that there has been no reply from OxonCC in response to Sutton Courtenay's questions as submitted by Charlie Hopkins.

GOB said Cllr Enright had not yet replied on a date for meeting with NPC-JC. The meeting may be delegated to an officer.

Agreed that a letter from NPC-JC should be sent from the Clerk (GF) to OxonCC Planning indicating 28 days will be insufficient and reiterating the missing response to questions.

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RA will produce initial draft of letter highlighting the long-elapsed period from when NPC-JC submitted requests and the implication that gives for the volume of information that may be within the response.

**Actions:**

- Clerk to issue letter to OxonCC (as above) – RA to draft, GF to forward. **[RA/GF]**
- RA to request Sutton Courtenay resident (modeller) to review Traffic Modelling Report. **[RA]**

c) Advice/Strategy for ongoing objections

More public objection to the planning application is needed.

Appleford held residents meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September on the HIF1 road to update and gauge support.

Option for other villages to hold local meetings. Sutton Courtenay considering.

HIF1 road raised at Clifton Hampden Parish Council meeting, additional residents meeting not required.

Culham considering combining residents invitation with the proposed ORAA public meeting in Didcot on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**Action:**

Individual Parish Councils to consider/hold village meetings. **[All]**

d) Engagement with Cllrs on Planning and Regulation Committee (letters/objections)?

Agreed that NPC-JC should write to councillors, but that would be better closer to the committee date. Concern is mounting on the rising costs of the road, pressures on OxonCC budgets and inability to complete the road are sensitive topics.

GOB view is David Rouane (SODC leader) will support HIF1 but should he recuse himself from voting (due his public commitment)?

Labour members likely to follow Geoff Saul's lead. Conservatives likely to support the road. That's six votes excluding chair.

SCR advised need to focus on planning issues. But can also criticise that no alternative, cheaper options for Didcot infrastructure have been developed and presented for planning.

**Action:**

Write to Councillors (closer to committee date). **[All]**

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## 3. Recent Cabinet/Council meetings – issues arising

### a) Local Transport & Connectivity Plan 2022

This has been approved and should now be the policy applying to all developments including the HIF1 road. OxonCC need to be challenged on this.

### b) Meeting Cllr Duncan Enright & CAG – status

Meeting not yet arranged – required urgently.

NPC-JC aware that cost inflation for the road is the most sensitive aspect with Councillors. The whole road is not fully fundable.

RA considered that a question/challenge to the audit committee of OxonCC should be undertaken. It was noted that the audit committee was starting a capital review. Also, a Freedom of Information request could be lodged on the lack of funding. RA to draft a request for assurance that the HIF1 scheme is fully funded.

SCR encouraged that NPC-JC request a clear statement from OxonCC that no land will be acquired through Compulsory Purchase unless all funding is secured.

Strong objections to Compulsory Purchase Orders would be most instrumental as CPO cannot (legally) proceed unless the project for acquisition is fully funded. Contact with landowners affected would be informative.

NPC-JC aware of one affected landowner with objections to the road.

SCR advised that land around Culham is owned by Morrells, motivated by land profit.

#### **Actions:**

- NPC-JC to request a clear statement from OxonCC – no CPO until HIF1 is fully funded. **[NPC-JC]**
- Chase up on meeting with Cllr Duncan Enright. **[GOB]**

### c) Discussions Cllrs Bearder, Bennett, Hicks, Webber, others

Cllr Bearder confirms that Cabinet is still determined to pursue the road.

### d) Other developments

Approach to government and MP:

GOB advised an approach to the new housing minister Lee Rowley, Minister for Housing (responsible for housing funds and infrastructure funds) part of the Department for Levelling Up,

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Housing and Communities, under Cabinet Minister Simon Clarke MP, Secretary of State.

Write requesting that all infrastructure funding provides for a preference for sustainable transport and provides secure environmental protection.

Also approach David Johnston local MP for sustainable transport for Oxfordshire.

## 4. Campaign Options

### a) Oxfordshire Roads Action Alliance (ORAA) Update

Set up of ORAA is progressing. It has a constitution and bank account. Noted that NPC-JC and ORAA are separate organisations with totally separate funding. NPC-JC members are not obliged to participate in ORAA.

CN expressed concern and stated that ORAA is a campaign group and Clifton Hampden PC does not wish to participate.

GOB advised this item followed from previous meeting discussions and a desire for a campaign vehicle that can generate funding to cover professional costs.

### b) Proposed ORAA Event Didcot

Arrangements in hand with FoE for an ORAA launch with a meeting and speakers in Didcot on 5<sup>th</sup> November:

- Jenny Raggett (Housing & Road Campaigner) confirmed
- Simon Lazare (Engineer – why projects fail?) confirmed
- Prof John Whitelegg also invited?

## 5. Mitigations

### a) Identify Mitigations (each PC to lead own village)

RA advised a united front from all parishes to present required mitigation if the HIF1 road were given planning approval. Sutton Courtenay's required measures would include downgrade B4016 from 40 to 30 mph and introduce speed calming measures to avoid the Drayton Road part of the B4016 being the south Abingdon by-pass. Linking to the HIF1 road. Downgrade A415 at Culham to reduce speed.

Agreed a unified statement on mitigation is required.

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b) Strategy to communicate mitigations without weakening the central objections to the road (assuming HIF1 approved)

Acknowledged this is a very difficult balance. SCR commented that the District councillors may have a role to communicate the parishes' view on mitigations.

It was feared that "value engineering" will remove any mitigation measures as cost savings. Objections required to any proposed approval that fails to incorporate mitigation measures (as planning conditions).

**Action:**

List of possible mitigations to be identified/extracted from Joint Doc. **[All]**

## 6. Administration

a) NPCJC Agreement

Signed copies outstanding.

b) Budget / Costs Arising

GF had sent a written report along with his apologies. Noted £7,300 remaining.

The Committee authorised payment of the £271 invoice from Charlie Hopkins for site visit expenses. **[Action: GF]**

Expected requirement to request experts review of Regulation 25 responses presented by OxonCC, expected this month.

RA reiterated that Sutton Courtenay will require £2,000 of its contribution to be spent on traffic modelling if no satisfactory explanation in the Regulation 25 response.

## 7. Any Other Business

None.

## 8. Next Meeting

To be decided – likely early November.

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