

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.
- 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.

Yours Faithfully,

Mrs Laura White
Clerk to the Council
For and on behalf of Western Valley Parish Council.