



Sutton Courtenay Parish Council

Minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 5th September 2023 at Sutton Courtenay CoE Primary School, commencing at 7.15pm.

Present: Councillors Rita Atkinson (chairman), Robert Dalby, Joanna O'Callaghan, Hugo Raworth, Jason Warwick and Fiona Wolveridge.

In attendance: Jennie Currie, Clerk; County & District Councillor Richard Webber; 4 members of the public.

- 2023/128 Public Participation
Issue: A resident queried how they could access the documents marked on the agenda as enclosed or to follow.
Response: The documents were available on request from the Clerk.
- 2023/129 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lyn Hodder and Father Morkos.
- 2023/130 Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest were received.
- 2023/131 Minutes for the meetings held on Tuesday 4th July and Thursday 10th August 2023
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4th July and Thursday 10th August 2023 were a true and accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman.
- 2023/132 Co-option of Councillors
Members noted that there were two vacancies to be filled.
- 2023/133 Complaint regarding the new bench in Frilsham Street
A resident of Frilsham Street had made a complaint regarding the installation of the memorial bench in Frilsham Street. They accused the Council of not following the planning process, this was incorrect and the District Council took no action. They had originally asked that the bench be removed and relocated, then requested a written apology in return for withdrawing their complaint.

RESOLVED that the following letter would be sent to the complainant:

I am writing on behalf of Sutton Courtenay Parish Council in response to your email exchanges with Jennie Currie (the Council's Clerk and Proper Officer). At the outset, on behalf of the Parish Council, I am extremely sorry at how understandably upset you are feeling. The Parish Council is fully appreciative that this is a serious and also very sensitive issue and has discussed the matter at some length.

In your most recent email to Jennie, you recognised the sensitivity of the matter and asked that the Parish Council address the following five issues:

- A signed letter apologising for not being contacted and consulted about the bench at any stage of the planning.
- An acknowledgement that you understand why the shock of coming home to find a bench being put in place caused an emotional response.

- An apology that we have received unpleasant actions against us as a result of not being correctly kept informed from the start.
- A promise that the Parish Council will work with the TVP, ourselves, or any immediate neighbour, if the area does become a focal point for anti-social behaviour so we can discuss alternative locations at that stage.
- Confirmation that the Parish Council will keep the area tidy including the upkeep of the bench.

The Parish Council appreciates that you reacted when you discovered a bench had been installed on the County Council owned verge outside your property, because of your anticipated fears around what a bench (or rather the use of it) might do to your quality of life and your property.

It also understands that, as it is a memorial bench to a young person who lived with his mother, within sight of where the memorial bench is located, and died tragically and most unexpectedly at a very young age, emotions run high.

While the Parish Council is sorry that you have been the target of trespass and verbal abuse, it cannot take any responsibility for how your reaction was made public and led to the abuse you suffered. You have done absolutely the correct thing by reporting it to the police and we hope very much it will not happen again.

The Parish Council recognises the distress the situation has caused you. Whilst it does not have a legal duty to consult, as a result of lessons learnt this year the Parish Council is developing a policy regarding Memorial Benches, Planting and Plaques for any future requests. The policy will include a consultation process for residential areas, with nearby households being informed before permission is granted.

Please note that as landowner, the County Council gave permission to the family of the deceased for the bench to be placed within viewing distance of their house, with no prior consultation with the Parish Council. The family was told by the County Council that the Parish Council would have to agree to take on the maintenance and insurance of the bench from the date of installation, which it agreed.

The Parish Council will always help and work with the police and, where it is within its powers, address any anti-social behaviour as well as ensure that the grass is kept cut around the bench. As Jennie has already confirmed to you that the grass verge is cut under contract by the Parish Council although owned by the County Council.

Once again, on behalf of the Parish Council I am very sorry for the upset this situation has caused you.

Yours sincerely,
Councillor Rita Atkinson
Chairman of Sutton Courtenay Parish Council

Councillor Raworth joined the meeting at 7.24pm.

2023/134 Planning applications

(a) Planning matters considered during the summer break

RESOLVED that the following observations that were submitted under delegated authority be recorded:

P23/V1451/FUL - Pipaway Engineering Ltd, Milton Road, Drayton – No objections

P23/V1703/FUL - Trident One Trident Park, Unit 1e Basil Hill Road, Didcot – No objections

P23/V1697/HH - 4-5 The Green, Sutton Courtenay – No objections

(b) Planning applications to be considered

RESOLVED that the following observations would be submitted:

P23/V1911/A - 143 Park Drive, Milton Park – No objections

P23/V1804/HH - 90 Milton Road, SC – No objections

P23/V1875/HH - 20 Appleford Road, SC – No objections

- 2023/134 Planning applications continued
(c) Additional planning correspondence
Members noted the decisions on previous applications
P22/V1053/RM - Phase A3 & A4 Signia Park, Didcot - GRANTED
P23/V1115/HH - 2 The Coal Yard, All Saints Lane, SC - GRANTED
P23/V0365/HH - 26 Church Street, SC - GRANTED
P23/V0859/FUL - Land and building west of Peewit Farm, SC - GRANTED
P23/V1069/FUL - 5 Ginge Brook, SC - GRANTED
P20/S1988/FUL Appeal - Culham Hill, Culham - DISMISSED
MW.0084/23 - Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site, Appleford Sidings, SC - APPROVED
MW.0071/23 - CEMEX Landfill Site, South of Bassett Lane, Sutton Wick - APPROVED
P23/V1506/LDP - 28 Appleford Road, SC - REFUSED
- 2023/135 HIF1 update
County Councillor Richard Webber provided an update on the application. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) refused the application on 8 main points. The application was then called in by the Secretary of State. There is currently some confusion as to whether the refusal was a decision or a resolution. If it was a decision then there would be no right to appeal.
Members asked Cllr Webber to provide the housing supply information. **RW**
The Parish Council can provide additional information to the Planning Inspectorate, the deadline is 4th October. The **Planning Working Party** would review the statements previously submitted and make a recommendation to Council.
- 2023/136 Hobbyhorse Lane North P21/V2682/O appeal
The appeal inquiry starts on Tuesday 12th September and is scheduled across two weeks.
(a) Supplementary statement
RESOLVED that the statement included at the end of these minutes be submitted.
(b) Additional expenditure for the planning consultant
RESOLVED that an additional £4,500 would be allocated from ear marked reserves to enable the Council's planning consultant to attend the inquiry as the Council's representative.
- 2023/137 Reports
(a) County Councillor
See item 2023/135 above. The construction of the build out on Drayton Road would start shortly. The Council recorded a vote of thanks to Cllr Webber for this commitment to this project.
(b) District Councillor
No additional comments.
(c) Parish Councillors
Cllrs Raworth and Warwick provided an update on the installation of the SIDs. A replacement metal bracket and battery connection had been requested from the supplier. The Clerk had ordered jubilee clips, and padlocks would be needed. The poles are not tall enough to provide 8ft clearance and the Church Street position is on a slow section of the road.

They would like to request additional poles. Cllrs O'Callaghan, Raworth and Warwick would bring a proposal for new poles on Church Street, Milton Road, Appleford Road and possibly other sites to the next meeting. **JO, HR & JW**
Cllr O'Callaghan asked if a member of the public could attend the FCC liaison committee's meeting regarding rights of way. The Clerk advised that the person could be appointed to the Council's Recreational Amenities Working Party which included rights of way. The Clerk would add the appointment to the next agenda. Cllr Warwick highlighted the Village Hall as a potential site for an EV charging station under OCCs current grant scheme. Cllr Atkinson and Dalby said they would discuss the matter with the trustees and look to register the Hall. **RA**

(d) Clerk

The Clerk had contacted the District Council regarding the two bus shelters on Milton Road. An Officer had confirmed the shelters belonged to the Parish Council and that the brick shelter was an active stop. The Officer would arrange for signage to be installed at the shelter.

The Clerk requested that when a Working Party meets that Councillors send her a summary of the meeting so that she could add items to the agenda. **ALL**

There had been an initial enquiry regarding claiming against the Council's insurance for damage to a car at the Recreation Ground car park, apparently the car had hit a branch in the hedge. The Clerk highlighted that it was important that when carrying out the fortnightly checks that the whole site included the car park is covered. The date of the check and any comments should be sent to the Clerk ASAP by email or text message. **ALL**

OCC would be formally consulting on creating a 20mph zone in Sutton Courtenay. The draft proposal shows that all the current 30mph zone would become 20mph, except the eastern end of Appleford Road after the junction with Abingdon Road. The Clerk had queried this with the project Officer highlighting the number of houses accessing Appleford Road in that section but had not yet had a response. Members asked Cllr Webber to query this with the Officer. **RW**

Councillors asked that an agenda item be added to enable to Council to consider requesting a reduction of speed limit in the 40mph areas to 30mph. **Clerk**

Councillor Webber left the meeting.

2023/138 Art Trail update

(a) Licence agreement with Milton Park

RESOLVED that the licence be accepted and signed by the Clerk. **Clerk**

(b) Oxford Oak final design and quote

The quote from Oxford Oak was £3,520 more than the original estimate which was submitted with the S106 funding application.

RESOLVED that the Clerk would seek a reduction in costs from Oxford Oak, then apply for additional funding from the S106 Officer. If the S106 funding was not available then the matter would be discussed by the Council before approving the order. **Clerk**

2023/139 Neighbourhood Plan

RESOLVED that the draft response to the clarification requests from Andrew Ashcroft, Independent Examiner, be submitted.

2023/140 Open Spaces

(a) Donation of oak saplings for the Village Green

RESOLVED that the oak saplings would be accepted. Cllr O'Callaghan would liaise with the resident regarding the location of the trees. **JO**

(b) Cutting of the meadow south of the cemetery

No further action would be taken regarding this matter.

(c) Current grass cutting service

The height of the grass verges was discussed. The verges had been cut in April and the new contractor had started in mid July, the verges had been due to be cut at the beginning of September but the contractor had had equipment failure. The contractor had assured the Clerk that the verges would be cut in September. The Clerk had contacted another supplier to obtain a quote for a one off cut, in case the main contractor was unable to complete the cut.

Members noted that the schedule for 2023 had been reduced from 7 cuts (monthly from April to October) to 3 cuts (March, June and September) and there was no contractor in place when the planned June cut should have been completed. The frequency of cuts would be monitored.

(d) Cleaning of the War Memorial

RESOLVED that the quote from Abingdon Stone and Marble for cleaning of the War Memorial would be accepted. The work would be completed in October 2023 before Armistice Day.

2023/141 Recreation Ground

(a) Sutton Courtenay Football Club request

Sutton Courtenay Cricket Club had been consulted prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the request would be granted for one year, therefore adding the following priority usage which had previously been under the Cricket Club:

September 2023 & May 2024: Training pitch on Wednesdays 6-9pm

September 2023 & May 2024: Main pitch for Sundays

August 2024: Main pitch for weekend friendlies - dates to be provided to the Clerk as the Cricket Club are hoping to bring back junior practice.

(June and July remains with no Football Club use and October to April remains as priority use for Football Club.)

The **Recreational Amenities Working Party** would meet to review the two licences.

(b) Review the fortnightly checks

The main issues were to do with grass cutting and litter.

(c) Outstanding issues with Kompan Ltd

The two wooden shelters had been repaired and the safety surface under the fitness equipment had been extended. The Clerk would contact Kompan to asked when the three bars on the fitness equipment would be refitted. **Clerk**

(d) Repairs to the skate park

RESOLVED that Clark & Kent Contractors would be contracted to complete the repairs at the skate park.

- 2023/142 Rights of Way S106 Project
The Clerk confirmed that the acceptance of conditions letter for the funding of the Recreation Ground southern footpath had been signed and submitted, and the funds were due to be released.
The legal agreement for the Public Rights of Way project would be issued shortly and signed by Councillors as previously agreed.
- 2023/143 Bench and memorial policy
The draft policy had been circulated, it would be considered at the next meeting.
- 2023/144 Consultation: Landscape Character Assessment
RESOLVED that a response would be submitted by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as similar documents had been prepared during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2023/145 Finance
(a) Insurance renewal
RESOLVED that the amended cover would be accepted.
RESOLVED that the insurance for October 2023 to September 2024 would be renewed with Hiscox Insurance Company Ltd via Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd.
(b) High Street phone box
Members noted the quote to remove the phone box was £1,500. The matter would not be progressed at this time.
(c) Internal auditor for 2023-24
RESOLVED that Mike Platten, April Skies Accounting Ltd, be reappointed as internal auditor for 2023-24.
(d) CIL retention
RESOLVED that the Parish Council would continue to receive its CIL contributions rather than asking the District Council to hold the funds on their behalf.
(e) Receipts and Payments report
RESOLVED that the following payments that were authorised under delegated authority be recorded:

Receipts for July 2023

OCC Grass cutting Section 101	£33.77
2 x interments	£375.00
Total receipts	£408.77

Direct Debits and pre agreed payments for August 2023

none				
Subtotal				£0.00

BACS & Cheque Payments to be agreed in August 2023

Elan City Ltd	3 SIDs	23/01139	59	£8,953.66
Community Heartbeat	Installation of new cabinet	17623	60	£250.00
Shield Maintenance Ltd	Litter & dog waste bins July	6770	61	£130.00
J Currie	Mileage July 2023	mileage	62	£52.00
HMRC	Tax and NI	Month 05	64	£394.17
Equals Prepayment card (Fairfax Plc)	Stationery, phone, keys	p14-27	66	£84.20
Subtotal				£9,864.03

Standing orders for August 2023

J Currie	Salary	Month 05	63	£1,371.00
Oxfordshire Pension Fund	Clerk's Pension	Month 05	65	£476.17
J Currie	Office Allowance	Month 05	mins	£26.00
Subtotal				£1,873.17

Total payments £11,737.20

2023/145 Finance

(e) Receipts and Payments report continued

RESOLVED that the following payments would be authorised:

Receipts for August 2023

2 x interments	£1,050.00
Interest on Santander savings account	£323.34
Total receipts	£1,373.34

Direct Debits and pre agreed payments for September 2023

ICO	Annual fee	ZA461840	67	£35.00
Subtotal				£35.00

BACS & Cheque Payments to be agreed in September 2023

Kompan Ltd	Quarterly inspection August 2023	248064	68	£496.80
C-Through Windows	Phone box Jul 2023 - final one	1710	69	£20.00
C-Through Windows	Bus shelter Jul 2023	1709	70	£40.00
Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council	Neighbouring PCs Joint Committee	NPCJC2023/4	71	£1,000.00
Tactical Fac Man Ltd	Grds Maintenance July	767	72	£697.50
Shield Maintenance Ltd	Litter & dog waste bins Aug	6847	73	£130.00
Equals Prepayment card (Fairfax Plc)	Petty cash plus £100	p28-32	74	£193.63
J Currie	Quarter 1 salary top up	Quarter 2	76	£1.07
HMRC	Tax and NI	Month 06	77	£394.17
Oxford Oak	Art Trail design work	911	79	£2,000.00
Subtotal				£4,973.17

Standing orders for September 2023

J Currie	Salary	Month 06	75	£1,371.00
Oxfordshire Pension Fund	Clerk's Pension	Month 06	78	£476.17
J Currie	Office Allowance	Month 06	mins	£26.00
Subtotal				£1,873.17
Total payments				£6,881.34

(f) Councillors to authorise payments

RESOLVED that Cllrs Atkinson and Raworth would authorise payments online. **RA & HR**

(g) Budget and Reserves report

Members noted the reports.

Close of meeting

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting of the Council would be held at 7.15pm, on Tuesday 3rd October. There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF SUTTON COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/23/3322187

Residential development up to 175 dwellings (Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved except means of access to the site from Frilsham Street) and associated works at Land north of Hobbyhorse Lane, Sutton Courtenay OX14 4BB

Public Inquiry commencing 12th September 2023

1.00 CONTEXT

1.01 The Inspector has invited me to submit this written Statement to assist the Inquiry.

1.02 At the time the Appeal Statement from SCPC was submitted, it was understood that VOWH would be presenting evidence and argument addressing the relationship between traffic from the Appeal Site and the delivery of Strategic Road improvements. The summary notes to the subsequent CMC with the Inspector 21st July 2023 appeared to confirm this and anticipated Inquiry time for discussion and X examination on two separate Highways issues:

(i) impacts of the scheme access on Hobbyhorse Lane/Frilsham Street to High Street and

(ii) Impacts on network related to provision of a new Thames Crossing

1.03 Subsequently, SCPC has been made aware that a Statement of Common Ground has been agreed between the parties on the second of these (ii), and VOWH no longer intends to support RR2. The resolution of the issue is proposed to be addressed in the manner set out in the current Draft S106 and relevant CIL Statement.

1.04 In brief, the relevant measures now proposed as an acceptable mitigation strategy involve:

- A financial contribution towards the delivery of HIF1
- A financial contribution towards local bus services
- Adjustments to signal phasing at Culham Bridges
- A cap on the number of dwellings that the above will address in advance of the completion of HIF1 (45)

- Provision for an addition bus contribution to allow the remaining 130 dwellings to be built in advance of HIF1 if that road scheme is not due to be completed by 2026.
- 1.05 SCPC does not agree with the SOCG signed by the Appellant and VOWH that the measures proposed adequately address and overcome the adverse impacts of the Appeal Scheme on the wider Highway network. This matter was addressed in part in SCPC initial Appeal Statement Section 4, but at that time SCPC was anticipating and relying on VOWH to provide evidence of the established severe problems on the local network. At this late stage it has not been possible to present detailed new evidence which SCPC would have commissioned if the issue had been apparent earlier.
- 1.06 These further representations address the efficiency and value of the recently agreed mitigation strategy in the context of known problems.

2.00 DISCUSSION

- 2.01 There is no dispute between the parties that the current highway network in the immediate area of Sutton Courtenay and Culham/Sutton Bridges suffers extreme congestion and delay in peak periods. The need to address the deficiencies of north/south traffic movement in this area and the need for a new Thames Crossing is the bedrock of the genesis of the HIF1 scheme.
- 2.02 Reference is made by the Appellant to the consideration of the Appleford Road Appeal in 2020 where 93 houses were proposed in Outline. The Inspector in that case had the benefit of substantial evidence, including queue length monitoring and time delays, to explain the design, workings and deficiencies of the network. SCPC supported VOWH at that time and submitted professional evidence including survey evidence of the severity of the problem, which was agreed to be incapable of resolution other than by the completion of an entirely new road and Thames Crossing i.e. HIF1.
- 2.03 In evidence supported by survey data and photographs taken in 2020, reference was made during that Appeal inter alia to frequent peak hour queues extending back over a kilometre to the west from the Appleford Road/Abingdon Road junction (where traffic turns north to cross the river via a series of obstacles), effectively blocking exit from the High Street and leading to delay, impatience and risky behaviour (See 3.10 in

extract from OCC POE Appleford Road below). There is no segregated bus or cycle route which would enable non-car traffic to safely bypass this regular and severe delay.

- 2.04 The Inspector in this case will no doubt view for himself the particular difficulties of achieving any improvements within the existing network, bearing in mind restriction to a single carriageway/absence of bus lanes/ narrow pavements etc at the river crossing. It is extremely unfortunate that the Inspector will have very limited information on this important matter because of the late decision by VOWH to withdraw objections.
- 2.05 In its POE to the Appleford Road Appeal, the Highway Authority stated that no 'temporary relief' would be delivered by proposed adjustments to traffic light sequencing, which was the only available action within the existing highway:

3.9 The county council has investigated potential improvements, including optimising and biasing signal times and introducing signals at the junction of Appleford Road and Abingdon Road. Unfortunately there is little to be gained from such alterations; altering signal times on the bridge only transfers the 'blocking back' from one junction to another, ie. favouring northbound traffic might prevent blocking of the Appleford Road Abingdon Road junction but would intensify 'blocking back' at the signalised junction of Abingdon Road (A415) and Tollgate Road and vice-versa; similarly any benefit gained from introducing signals at the Appleford Road Abingdon Road junction would be countered by 'blocking back' elsewhere or increased queuing on Appleford Road.

3.10 In addition to the excessive queueing and delay the county council identified potential harm to highway safety arising from the increased queueing; specifically an increased probability of rear end shunts with more stationary vehicles waiting in the carriageway and the risk posed by frustrated drivers attempting to merge with the queues and atypical yielding.

Extract from OCC POE to Appleford Road Appeal

It would appear that the HA has now changed its mind (again). I ask the Inspector to interrogate technical witnesses to establish whether proposed changes in this location would achieve anything meaningful, as SCPC cannot envisage any real improvements will result.

- 2.05 With the announcement of the success of the HIF1 bid in July 2020 in the run up to the Appleford Road Appeal PI, the HA considered that delivery of the long term

strategic solution by January 2024 could then be relied on, and so at a very late stage removed the in principle objection to Appleford Road development, subject to a managed programme of building. It was acknowledged that all new traffic would adversely impact the existing severe overloading, but it was considered that 43 units (the proposed build programme by March 2023 Phase 1) could be acceptable as it would only cause additional problems for a short time before HIF1 provided strategic improvements in January 2024.

- 2.06 As is the proposed arrangement in the current Appeal, if HIF1 would not be in place within 6 months of the completion of the first phase, the remainder of the scheme would be allowed to proceed on payment of an additional bus contribution.
- 2.07 The Inspector dismissed the Appeal for planning rather than Highway reasons. He confirmed however that traffic impacts were a material consideration Below I draw out a few salient findings before comparing them to the current Appeal.

25. *...as the addition of the traffic movements from the proposal would be likely to exacerbate the delays that are experienced at these junctions, this would further impede the free flow of traffic. This is a matter for my consideration. Without measures that would reduce such an effect to a satisfactory level, this would be a likely consequence of the proposal.*

30. *The likelihood of the new river crossing going ahead, or the 'with crossing scenario', is paramount to the consideration of whether or not the likely highway impacts of the proposal would be acceptable. The recent confirmation of the funding is a significant milestone, and OCC are confident that the timescale for its completion in 2024 will be adhered to.*

32. *....That it would not make a developer contribution towards the new river crossing is not surprising as it is already funded.*

39. *I consider there is a high degree of certainty that the new river crossing will proceed and within a timescale that corresponds favourably with the proposal. On this basis, the traffic impacts of the proposal would not be severe because, in all likelihood, the new river crossing would free up highway capacity and the traffic generated from the proposal would also benefit from its use. The proposal would, therefore, be unlikely to contribute unsatisfactorily to further queueing at the existing junctions and the associated congestion. This would also restrict the potential for adverse impacts on highway safety arising from the frustration of drivers, if this was to occur, as well as for pedestrians and cyclists.*

- 2.08 It is clear from the above extracts that the Inspector was completely confident, on the basis of HA assurances, that there would be no delays in delivery of HIF1, and that this was fundamental to his belief that the additional traffic would only have a short-term adverse impact. He also understood no additional developer funding was required as HIF1 was entirely funded in advance. As is evident from submissions made by OCC on CIL compliance to this Appeal the latter point is not correct as there remains a significant funding gap to be met by new developer contributions as well as clawback. As time has shown there was misplaced confidence in the 2024 date for completion of HIF1.
- 2.09 Following very substantial objections and delay, OCC resolved to refuse (its own) HIF1 planning Application (submitted November 2021) in July 2023, and determination will now be made by the SoS following a Call-In. Current indications are that the Inquiry will commence in December 2023, with the CPO and related matters Inquiry before the same Inspector in January 2024. In the normal course of events a decision on both is unlikely before Easter 2024, and the prospect of a General Election shortly after might create further delay due to the usual 'purdah' convention.
- 2.10 I am unaware that the delivery date for HIF1 has been reasonably revised following this additional delay. Notification of the 'new' date of completion by 2026 significantly predates the Call In. I understand that the construction period is estimated to last 30-36 months to completion. This suggests completion and opening of the new road at best sometime during summer 2027 or later.
- 2.11 The Appellant provides a timeline for construction and completion of the 175 homes on the site in the SoC at P 3.7 Fig.7, with an estimated 35dpa between March 2025 and August 2030. The first 45 are expected to be completed by August 2026, around 12 months in advance of HIF1 completion as assumed above. The S106 means that OCC will accept the Additional Bus contribution and all remaining houses will be released for completion. On the programme currently expected, 80 units will be occupied before HIF1 is delivered, a number and traffic generation considerably higher than judged acceptable despite adverse impacts. If HIF1 delivery is further delayed this will not affect the continuation of the build-out.

- 2.12 SCPC has been unable to establish from available public information the extent of other permissions and design stages yet to be achieved before construction of HIF1 can commence. We ask the Inspector to seek this information from relevant parties to inform his conclusion as to anticipated date of delivery. CD 4.18 shows an extensive list of pre-commencement Conditions will need to be approved, including new ecological surveys in season. It is unclear to SCPC if these Conditions discharge stages are included within the 30-36 month delivery stage, or will be required in advance of any commencement, thus delaying delivery.
- 2.13 The position of the HA when agreeing to a phased release was that after the first 45, a 'Review Mechanism' would be used to take account of conditions prevailing at that time. Any reasonable interpretation of this involves a review of traffic conditions, and if HIF1 has not been completed they will be the same or worse than at present i.e. severe overloading and congestion, continuing to adversely impact on movement around Sutton Courtenay.
- 2.14 Instead, the 'Review Mechanism' is limited to a requirement for an additional payment towards improved bus services. The HA itself has stated in the context of the HIF1 planning application (CD P 145) that there will be minimal benefit in adding buses to the existing position, as buses would simply join existing congestion in the absence of any segregated bus route.

145. The application site is currently serviced by five pairs of bus stops (10 bus stops in total). However, existing bus services are infrequent and the applicant has stated in most cases are not frequent enough to make bus travel an attractive alternative to cars. Due to the severance created by the River Thames and the historic road network, there are limited opportunities available to improve bus journey times and reliability in a north-south direction.

In this context, the questions must be asked – what use are additional bus contributions in advance of HIF1 completion? What mitigation is achieved? SCPC urges the Inspector to recognise that additional bus contributions will have no positive impact on prevailing traffic conditions and modal shift. The problem and the solution are unrelated. All new traffic from the Appeal site will be decanted into a severely congested network.

- 2.15 The June 2021 Development Release Strategy (DRS) has as its first requirement (OCC CIL Compliance Doc CD 1.9):

Development site housing build programmes/trajectories/occupations being aligned with (or after) the delivery of HIF1 which will require occupation thresholds/controls on development sites.

(my emphasis)

- 2.16 SCPC appreciates that the adopted DRS is intended to allow new developments to be 'ready to go' as soon as HIF1 is delivered. However, in this case, history and experience has shown that there has been unforeseen delay in HIF1 delivery, with completion slipping from 2024 to 2026. Additional uncertainties now exist with the resolution to refuse and subsequent Call In.

- 2.17 SCPC asks the Inspector:

- to place limited confidence on the now quoted HIF1 delivery date of 2026.
- To take account of the absence of any significant mitigation of impacts before HIF1 is delivered

- 2.18 As referenced in my original statement at 3.18 and in evidence from VOWH, the Appeal site is not anticipated to deliver new housing in the next 5 years. A new Joint Local Plan is currently in preparation, with Consultation on preferred sites due this Autumn. Sites allocated in the current LP but yet to be granted Planning permission will be assessed alongside new sites in a consistent manner.

3.00 IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS APPEAL SCHEME

- 3.01 There is no urgent need for new housing to be delivered from this site in the immediate future, bearing in mind the HLS position and local delivery of substantial amounts of unplanned new housing around the village during the current LP period (3.15 in SCPC original statement).
- 3.02 In advance of completion of HIF1, any new traffic – both construction and that generated by new residents – will exacerbate existing problems on a severely overloaded road network, to the detriment of safety, air quality, the efficient working of the Highway network and the convenience of local residents.

- 3.03 There is continued uncertainty over the date of delivery of HIF1, and thus no clarity on how long existing severely congested network conditions will remain. The 'mitigation strategy' proposed via a S106 will have no positive effect on existing conditions, but instead would allow the delivery of the entire scheme without HIF1 being in place, with severe adverse consequences.
- 3.04 The emerging Local Plan process will enable re-assessment of the allocated site based on more robust information than was available when it was previously allocated. If successful it is far more likely that it can be released in a way which better coordinates with planned strategic road improvements than is achievable via this Appeal.
- 3.05 There are other sound reasons to dismiss this Appeal. SCPC considers that on the single issue of adverse impacts on an existing severely overloaded highway network the Appeal should be dismissed. No element of the Planning Balance in this case outweighs the severe harm that would result from approval.

*Deirdre Wells Dip TP MRTPI
Red Kite Development Consultancy for Sutton Courtenay Parish Council
September 2023*