

**Written replies to questions
under standing order 12
at the Council meeting held on
20 February 2013**



This document sets out the written replies to questions asked at the Council meeting on 20 February 2013.

Q2 Question from Councillor Jim Halliday to Councillor Matthew Barber:

'On 5 October 2012 all Councillors were sent details of the Capital Grant bids submitted by local organisations. In December the four area committees considered the majority of the bids and decided what if any grant should be awarded. However, a number of applications were excluded from the area committee agendas as apparently they were considered to be Vale-wide - for example: Age UK Oxfordshire who bid for £2,714, Oxfordshire Association for the Blind who bid for £570, and the Oxfordshire Chinese Community Advice Centre who bid for £5,000.

Please could the Leader list all such Vale-wide applications and for each state whether a decision has been made whether to award a grant, who made the decision, and the amount awarded?'

Answer to Q2 from Councillor Matthew Barber:

'The applications that you cite were the only such applications that had been received. Each of the applications were assessed by officers and presented to me for a decision. None of the applications received an officer recommendation for funding, and I supported this view. Therefore, no funds were awarded in these cases. There has since been one further application from South and Vale Carers that was awarded £378.'

Q3 Question from Councillor Tony de Vere to Councillor Matthew Barber:

'How many festival grant applications were received in 2012/13 and what was the total sum requested?'

Answer to Q3 from Councillor Matthew Barber:

'There were nine applications received, the total sum being requested was £11,834.'

Q8 Question from Councillor Jerry Patterson to Councillor Mike Murray:

'In what way is the list of strategic housing sites in paragraph 13 of agenda item 11 of 8 February Cabinet agenda, set out in italics below, different to that consulted on by the council over two years ago?'

The allocation of the following strategic housing sites (which are in addition to those already identified in the current Local Plan, such as Grove Airfield) and details of the development they will accommodate, and infrastructure and services that will be sought

- *Valley Park, Harwell (2,150 homes)*
- *Crab Hill, north of Wantage and east of Grove (1,500 homes)*
- *Monk's Farm, north of Grove (750 homes)*
- *Land on the northern part of Harwell Oxford Campus (400 homes) and*
- *Land on the south side of Park Road, Faringdon (350 homes)'*

Answer to Q8 from Councillor Mike Murray:

'Thank you for this question regarding the imminent and highly important consultation on the Vale Local Plan. I am pleased to announce that we will be launching this major consultation exercise on 28 February. This will be a valuable opportunity for all our stakeholders and especially our local communities to see, scrutinise and to comment on our emerging proposals for guiding development across the Vale.

Some of you will recall the consultation on the preferred options version of the then emerging core strategy, in January 2009. This was followed a year later with another consultation on further changes in February 2010. Since then a great deal has happened. We have seen a change in national government and of course here at the Vale this current administration took over in May 2011. We have seen the introduction of the Localism Act, the rationalisation of national planning policy into the concise and much more user friendly National Planning Policy Framework and now, at long last, the promised revocation of the South East Plan.

The previous consultation referred to in the question relates back to the one that ended in February 2010. That in itself introduced significant changes to what had been consulted on in 2009.

- it increased by 10% the land required for housing, to try to meet the South East Plan target numbers
- it introduced a new housing site of about 400 homes to the north of Harwell Oxford
- it identified no major housing development south west of Abingdon, as there were no solutions apparent to the serious transport problem
- it introduced a site for up to 1,500 homes north east of Wantage, with a new relief road

It also confirmed that work would continue on proposals for the development of 2150 homes in Harwell Parish, east of the A34, and for about 400 homes south of Park Road in Faringdon.

The consultation we are about to launch looks fifteen years ahead, in line with government guidance - three years further ahead than that held in 2010: ie to 2029 rather than to 2026. The implications of this are that we need to plan for three more years of housing. We also know more now about the capacity and deliverability of some of the sites. We have of course also taken account of the windfall housing that has been built in the subsequent years, which contributes to

meeting our housing requirement over the period this local plan will cover. The draft local plan therefore contains two significant changes:

- It introduces proposals for 750 homes at Monks Farm, north of Grove, which will also help deliver the northern link road between the development at Grove airfield and the A338, and
- It reduces the capacity of the strategic site at Faringdon, from 400 to 350 homes. This follows more intensive examination of the site capacity and will better manage the site's relationship with the local landscape than was hitherto the case

You can see further details of these sites in the local plan when it is published.

You will be aware that the Secretary of State has announced that he intends to table the Order that will give effect to the Revocation of the South East Plan when Parliament returns from the current recess. This will consign the South East Plan to the dustbin. We were expecting this, albeit the precise timing was not known. We had already taken the decision to move ahead with the current consultation because local communities deserve the opportunity to see what plans are being prepared and because we want to hear what they have to say about them. New information and new evidence is coming forward over the summer that we will take into account before finalising the plan and confirming any changes to the current draft plan's housing numbers. We also want to know what our local communities think about the current version of the plan so we can also take those views into account before finalising the plan.

This consultation is therefore a very important opportunity for people to feed in now with their thoughts and concerns, and with their hopes and suggestions. And of course this is not just about housing - it is also about our town centres and our places of work, and our valuable natural and built heritage. We are looking for feedback on all aspects of the plan and are looking forward to hearing what they have to say.'