

Leader of the Council
Cllr Matthew Barber



Cllr Jenny Hannaby
Old Yeomanry House
27 Wallingford Street
Wantage
OX12 8AU

Cllr Matthew Barber
councillor@matthewbarber.co.uk
Mobile: 07816 481452
Council: 01235 540391

Abbey House, Abbey Close
Abingdon, OX14 3JE

18th February 2014

Dear Jenny,

I write in response to your question at Council in December. I apologise that I have not been able to respond sooner, I was hoping to have some more detail to be able to disclose, but at the time of writing this is not available and so with the next meeting of Council approaching I am responding as fully as I can.

As you know these matters are still subject to the complex and confidential negotiations for the Section 106 Agreement on the Grove Airfield development and of course the forthcoming planning application and subsequent Section 106 Agreement for Crab Hill, due to be considered later this week. Neither of us will want to jeopardise these negotiations as I know we both want to secure the best possible infrastructure package for the people of Grove, Wantage and the wider Vale.

Once the Section 106 Agreements are in place I think it will be useful to publish full details of how we intend to achieve the infrastructure requirements for this part of the District. This will fit with the Cabinet's intention of publishing an Infrastructure and Community Benefits Strategy and Area Action Plan for the Science Vale area. The funding for both of these projects I am sure you will be extremely supportive of at our Council meeting.

We are obviously concerned to deliver all of the required infrastructure; schools, health, leisure etc, but you rightly highlight roads as being of particular concern in these cases.

The Vale has already achieved a great deal in leading the fight for improvements to the A417 at Rowstock and Featherbed Lane, and continue to press the County Council to prioritise cycle improvements along that route. We have also been instrumental in securing significant funding for the Milton Interchange and Chilton Junction. These may seem remote from the matters being discussed at Grove and Wantage, but as we all know Harwell Oxford and Milton Park are likely to be large employers of those living in these new developments, as well as many who live in Wantage and Grove already, and so improvements to the East will be to the benefit of residents. Similarly I am a firm believer that improvements to cycling provision

along the A417 route will not just be to the benefit of cyclist, but to other road users. That is why we continue to prioritise these matters in discussions around infrastructure.

To answer your specific question about funding, we are seeking significant contributions from developers from all of the major schemes in the area, as well as calling on the County Council to prioritise projects in the Grove and Wantage area and to assist with delivery of the Wantage Eastern Link Road by prioritising this scheme for funding from the Department of Transport distributed via the Oxfordshire Local Transport Board. We will also continue to seek additional funding from Government and other sources, as we have been so successful in doing so far. This spread of funding options will help to ensure that we are able to deliver the projects, rather than relying on one source of funding which could falter.

As you are aware the Council has also secured the ability to borrow at favourable rates to help accelerate the delivery of infrastructure. This will be on the basis of repayment from other sources, it is not currently out intention to borrow to fund transport projects directly as it does not appear that this will be necessary.

As for timing, again I am afraid the trigger points for all developments are part of the confidential negotiations which are ongoing, but you can be assured that wherever possible I am pushing for early delivery, ideally prior to development. In order to get the maximum benefit we need to see these improvements in place now and to minimise or eliminate any period during which further pressure is placed on existing infrastructure.

I look forward to being able to update all councillors further in due course once negotiations have been concluded.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Matthew Barber
Leader of the Council