

Written responses to questions – 13 July 2022

Council meeting

A. Question from Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne to Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for development and infrastructure

“The house building in Great Western Park, which sits on the boundary of Didcot and Harwell, appears to be almost complete, if not already completed.

The provision for medical facilities, in the form of a GP surgery, was part of the legal agreement with the developers. Can we have an update on what the progress is on the GP surgery, as this is a clear concern for the local public?”

Answer

Thank you for your question on a matter I know is of keen interest to local residents.

The Vale of White Horse District Council has been actively engaging with supporting the former Oxfordshire CCG (OCCG) (now Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB)) and Woodlands Medical Centre, to find a mutually acceptable way forward which will enable the delivery of a new branch surgery at Great Western Park. The new premises will also ease pressure on space at the existing surgery.

The original Great Western Park development S106 Agreement directed that the land be transferred to the Vale Council as at that time Oxfordshire CCG was unable to hold land. As the council is not a provider of healthcare facilities this has complicated matters and a significant amount of officer time has been spent trying to move this forward to the benefit of Didcot residents.

In April 2022, the OCCG confirmed in writing to the council that it has delegated powers from NHS England to be the commissioner of Primary Care Services in Oxfordshire and they are keen to ensure that primary medical services operate from the Great Western Park site to serve the local population. OCCG has also confirmed that the Woodlands Medical Centre is willing to expand in the locality and has written formally to the council confirming that Woodlands Medical Centre has nominated a preferred medical developer and requested that the council progresses a number of matters to enable this to happen. This is now underway.

The matter is complex but, by continuing to work together, we are hopeful that this will enable the ICB and Woodlands Medical Centre to deliver the health centre in a timely manner. I understand they hope that the new surgery building will open its door to patients by 2025 at the latest. I would encourage people registered with Didcot GP practices to get involved with their local patient groups so they can be part of the discussions about the future of this project, which is important to the growing population of the town and its surrounding areas.

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B. Question from Councillor Bob Johnston to Councillor Helen Pighills Cabinet member for healthy communities

"It is 20 years since the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre in Abingdon opened. Can the Cabinet member give an approximate figure for the number of visitors to the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre since then?"

Answer

Thank you for your question which helpfully highlights the many years of service that the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre has provided, and which continues to be delivered with our leisure partners GLL. The leisure centre is a vital facility for helping to keep our residents active and healthy, and attracts people from a wide area, not just Abingdon.

The centre was opened in 2002 and some of us were delighted to go along Sunday before last to mark its 20th birthday with leisure centre staff and customers.

The leisure centre in Abingdon, costing £11 million pounds, was the largest leisure project in Southern England. I understand from colleagues who were part of the Liberal Democrat administration at the time, that this significant project was delivered on time and within budget by hard working officers.

Our reporting data covers a period from April 2002 to May 2022 and identifies circa 13.67 million visits in that time