

Vale of White Horse District Councillors' Report

Watchfield and Shrivenham Ward

Cllr Katherine Foxhall katherine.foxhall@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Cllr Viral Patel viral.patel@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

September 2024

Ward Overview

ARAP Scheme

Following coordination meetings with other agencies, the Vale of White Horse have drafted an FAQ which should aid parishes when questions are raised by residents. This FAQ has been made available in both printable and online forms, and we hope these answer many of the questions we have heard over the last few months. This information focuses on the Vale's responsibilities and what we are aware of, but also provides links to material available around national policy and its implementation. We understand some further information was provided by the MoD and distributed around Shrivenham which speaks to some broader aspects of the program.

Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits application for commercial development

[OCC Application MW.0151/23](#)

The applicant has made further changes to the planning application and provided additional documentation in support. The headline change is a reduction of the floorspace from 42,286sqm to 33,592sqm, which represents a 20% reduction. We will review the changes and update our representation where we feel it adds value, however officers assessing the application have noted that all previous comments will be considered when looking at the new changes, as such it is not necessary to resubmit earlier comments. The new consultation is due to close on the 10th October.

Bin mapping project

We have reported on the bin mapping project in the past, while the process of mapping the bins and litter hotspots is complete, there is much work still to be done. The council are now working on uploading and integrating the information into the councils GIS system, which will allow officers to easily see where all bins exist, any litter hotspots and use this information to negotiate with our contractors while improving the speed and accuracy of decisions around requests from parishes.

The Vale anticipates that once all gathered information is integrated into our systems, they will perform an analysis of the current bin locations and emptying arrangements and open dialog with parishes on any changes they feel would benefit residents.

Flooding on Cross Trees estate - Shrivenham

After working with council officers, site team and residents for several months, we are hopeful that the regular flooding in Lawrence Avenue below the new school site may now be remedied.

Collapse of ISG Construction (via OCC) – Shrivenham

The construction company ISG, which went into administration on 20 September, was the contractor building the Shrivenham school with the project now in the contractual 12 months defect period. We understand that OCC are in contact with the school Trust to ensure continuity.

Solar Farm application – Coleshill / Buscot

Following the public presentation, we have been hearing from residents in Buscot and Coleshill with concerns about the expected solar farm application expected at Old Hayes Farm, Coleshill. Concerns include proposed site access via Buscot, connection timelines and flood risk. Residents can find out more about the proposals here: <https://abeienenergyprojects.co.uk/projects/#old-hayes>. We would draw residents' attention to the new Joint Local Plan, which at Regulation 19 stage gains weight in planning matters. Relevant policies include:

- NH2 – Nature Recovery (requires at least 20% biodiversity net gain on all development)
- CE5 – Renewable Energy (clear requirements for criteria re: unacceptable impacts)

Coleshill Churchyard wall repairs.

We are disappointed to hear that due to the extremely high quotes received for repair to the wall, that there will be an extra delay to the repairs of the wall as approvals are needed from Cabinet and Scrutiny to authorise the payments. We will keep an eye on this as it goes through the process.

Fernham – dropped kerb at Elmside

After Katherine raised the issue again, County Council have confirmed that a project for installation of a dropped kerb to enable residents in Elmside to access the car park has now been added to the workplan, which means we will receive regular updates in the Faringdon Area Transport Advisory Committee.

Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee.

Parish councils are reminded that all parishes in the ward are welcome to attend the Faringdon Area Transport Advisory Committee, which meets four times a year and regularly discusses matters relevant to our villages. All Agendas, Minutes and dates for future meetings are available from the Faringdon Town Council website: <https://www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk/council/minutes/joint-committees/>

Council News

September Special Council

In September the council met to review the Vale's response to warding arrangements for the Vale put forward by the electoral commission. We were pleased to see the current proposals overall aligned with the Vale's earlier response. However, we felt there were some areas where adjacent villages and their joint working and cultural identity were not well captured, Katherine and Viral made representations to highlight the need to retain villages with close ties in a single ward. We also suggested the unique nature of Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings and the Coxwells should not be lost by being merged into a ward with Faringdon.

The second item of review at Council was to vote on the draft Joint Local Plan 2041, before it is put forward for a final public consultation. The Green group commented on various aspects of the proposed local plan, noting that the overwhelming comment from residents was for commercial space near where people lived, instead the JLP focused heavily on commercial space in Harwell and Milton Park.

Overall, the Green group welcome the local plan as it carries forward undeveloped sites allocated in the 2031 plan does not add any more to 2041, while strengthening policies around social and environmental requirements for developments. Although we were disappointed that some language and targets were softened from the last draft, specifically, we had hoped to retain the requirement for 50% affordable housing, but this was reduced to 40%, and requirements around accounting for embodied carbon emissions were deemphasised. We recognise that a viability study was carried out for the Vale that demonstrated stronger policies in some areas were unlikely to make it through review by the inspectorate.

<https://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=108&MIId=3373&Ver=4>

Consultations

South and Vale Joint Local Plan 2041 - Regulation 19 Consultation

From October 1, there will be a 6-week opportunity to comment on the final version of the local plan being put forward for consideration. This is a technical and formal process under a legal requirement, to ensure the plan is sound and legally compliant. Please see here to review the plan and make any comments you feel are relevant. <https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/jlp>

Review of Polling locations in the Vale

The Vale is in the process of reviewing polling locations across the district, there is an open consultation. The notable impact in our ward are around Fernham and Longcot, please take a look and comment on the proposal, and feel free to let us know if you disagree with the proposed changes. <https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/legal-and-democratic/vowh-polling-districts-and-places-review/>