



## **Long Wittenham Parish Council**

The Old Stables, Fieldside, Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RG  
Email: longwittpc@hotmail.co.uk

David Johnston MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

2nd August 2023

Dear Mr Johnston,

### **HIF1 Road Project. Didcot to Culham Planning Application Reference R3.0138/21**

You will be aware that the planning application for the HIF1 project was rejected by the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Committee on 18th July. We understand that the government has 'called in' the application for review and that the Planning Inspectorate will now make the final decision.

Long Wittenham Parish Council has supported the project since its inception..

In particular the Parish Council favours plans for a new road west of the railway line linking Didcot and the Culham Science Centre with a river crossing. The council believes that this new link will ease traffic flows passing through Long Wittenham as the expansion of Ladygrove north-east of Didcot gathers pace. In addition a bypass of Clifton Hampden will ensure that village is not affected by any increased traffic flow.

Year by year this village sees an exponential rise in vehicle movements and this is likely to increase as large scale housing developments continue in the Didcot area. Over the last few years we have implemented a number of projects to reduce traffic flow. These include chicanes, speed humps and more recently a 20mph speed limit with little effect. In addition, we have planned and supplied land for a cycle path linking us with Clifton Hampden, but these plans have been thwarted at every stage by OCC. As our school and pre-school are in the High Street, the only road through the village, the congestion at busy times is bad, often leading to road rage.

As a Parish Council, we are extremely disappointed at the stance of our South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) representatives, both of whom voted against HIF1 for apparently green reasons, despite being aware of the increasing traffic issues we have in the village, with the resulting impact on air quality as the vehicles queue to get through the village. We do support green initiatives and have implemented several such projects in the last few years. However, we feel we need to be realistic about the potential benefits of green alternatives to a new road. For example, there is a suggestion from our elected

representatives that replacing the HIF1 road with cycle paths locally will reduce traffic flow. We agree that cycle paths reduce significantly the risk to cyclists but we cannot find any convincing evidence that in RURAL areas it reduces traffic flow, especially in our village with no regular bus service and no shop.\*

Long Wittenham Parish Council is asking for your support to ensure that this package of much need infrastructure improvements is approved, including making representation to the relevant minister on our behalf.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Brown', with a horizontal flourish underneath.

Steve Brown  
Chair, Long Wittenham Parish Council

\* One quote from an article entitled "Cycling on rural roads" stated : 'Reducing vehicular traffic volumes is difficult and often requires considerable effort to persuade drivers to choose alternate routes.' (Journal of the Australasian College of Road Safety – Volume 25 No.4, 2014)