

Thank you for the booklet on the future of the Vale.

I cannot comment on the level of the CIL etc because I don't know the cost of the infrastructure and the other numbers involved - and simply don't have the time to go through everything in the necessary detail to make an informed comment. However, I would offer some comments on the outcomes we would like to see.

- In principle we are in favour of more good housing, especially at lower prices. I am a volunteer on some projects with the Oxford hospitals and am aware they face huge problems in recruiting and retaining nursing staff. One of the contributing causes is the high cost of housing in S Oxfordshire - I read recently it's the second most expensive place in the UK after London. And our allocation policy should favour the young teachers, nurses and others whom we need to staff and develop our infrastructure.

- I have recently heard very well-informed criticism of some of the assumptions in the modelling programmes for employment, transport and other infrastructure. It is essential that these exercises are transparent so that we can all see how you arrive at your conclusions and subsequent decisions.

- We live on the A417 in Harwell village so have a strong interest in road development and traffic flows to growing sites such as the Harwell Campus and Milton Park. Traffic on the A417 is often heavy and fast, despite the efforts of our local PCSOs to maintain a presence and keep speeds down. At a consultation exercise, my concerns were countered with the argument that it was of course an A road and heavy traffic was to be expected, but it is important to bear in mind that it is also a village street. It is important for all that traffic levels are kept to a minimum and road design should work towards speed control and traffic calming.

- I am constantly disappointed by the lack of imagination and attention given to cycleways. We have fairly wide experience of Germany and the Netherlands, where it is normal practice to include cycle routes from the beginning. I realise that the cost of this must come from the infrastructure budget, but the benefits in terms of health, reduced emissions and wear and tear on roads go much wider than the cost of maintenance.

- There is a reference to attracting high quality shops and businesses. I would like to think that this does not simply mean up-market chain stores. In our local shopping town, Didcot, there are a number of small specialist shops and businesses which provide things which we all need to live, rather than things the big stores want to persuade us to buy. I hope that the planning authorities will make provision for these services and enterprises to be maintained at a local level and not pushed out onto out of town industrial estates. Shopping malls are all very well, but they are often indistinguishable from one another, so you have no idea whether you are in the Clarendon Centre, the Oracle, or the Allgaeu Centrum in Bavaria. A wide spread of shops is essential for everyday life.

Apologies for the generality of these comments, but I hope they are useful.

Regards

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