

Cllr Emily Smith
Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council
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By email

**The Leader's Office
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
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Councillor Liz Leffman
Leader of the Council

11th November 2022

Dear Emily,

Re: Lodge Hill slips

Thank you for your letter dated 10th November 2022 regarding the Lodge Hill slips infrastructure scheme. I wholeheartedly agree that the scheme is a very important one and there are several benefits that could be achieved from its delivery as you have described. It is for that reason we at the County Council have worked tirelessly to try and secure the funding to deliver the scheme.

As you will already be aware, the scheme was added to the Growth Deal programme with a contribution of £12m at the FOP meeting on 30th November 2021. When added to the S106 funding and DLUHC funding we already had, this made the scheme fully funded for the first time in the scheme's life.

In March 2022, DLUHC withdrew their funding from the scheme, and requested that a business case was submitted to them for consideration. This was completed, and since then the discussions have been ongoing with DLUHC, but so far there has been no reallocation of funding by DLUHC to the project. The project has therefore returned to being part funded only.

Through 2022, using the funding available, the work has continued with the design and a planning application for the scheme was recently submitted. During the June 2022 FOP meeting this was discussed. Should funding for the scheme be confirmed, then construction would be able to start during 2023, subject to this planning permission.

As you will also be aware, there are ongoing discussions with Homes England about the final tranche of £30m for the Growth Deal which Oxfordshire has yet to receive. As a result of the potential risk this may not be forthcoming, the County Council and district officers are scenario planning for this potential reduction, and this includes consideration on which schemes can be delivered should the Growth Deal be cut to £120m.

For the reasons described above, I cannot commit to delivering Lodge Hill slips until we are certain that full funding is available, but I would like to reassure you that Oxfordshire County Council continues to explain the benefits of the scheme and will play its part through FOP in explaining to government departments and Homes England the implications of not doing so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Leffman', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Liz Leffman
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