

District Councillor Debby Hallett's Report to North Hinksey Parish Council

19 July 2012

- 1. Neighbourhood Plans.** I hope that North Hinksey Parish Council had representatives at the recent Vale-hosted event. The Localism Act empowers local communities to make their own decisions about development, and provides the means to do that. Premises of local planning:
 - The parish will grow over the coming years.
 - The parish can control how development will happen, via a Neighbourhood Plan.
 - If there is no Neighbourhood Plan, the Vale will do the planning for you.The Vale is keen to help parishes who want to develop their own Neighbourhood Plan. If you'd like more information, contact me, or the Planning Department at the Vale.
- 2. IHSP and Core Strategy.** As I reported last month, the Vale abandoned their Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP). Delivery of the Core Strategy, which will guide Vale planning over the next 15 years, is now delayed probably until as late as 2014. There are serious financial consequences: an un-budgeted spend of £145k for extra senior planning staff to move Core Strategy work forward; delay in adoption on Neighbourhood Plans (which must comply with Core Strategy); absence of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL – you'll be hearing a lot about this in future), which will bring more money to fund infrastructure improvements in neighbourhoods where housing is built. With every day of delay we lose more money for local services. Everyone who cares about local planning and developers' contributions to area amenities should keep an eye on this – it's a serious situation.
- 3. Tilbury Lane.** As I reported last month, this development of 150 homes is going ahead. The developers of Tilbury Lane are fulfilling their policy obligations to provide play areas within the new estate. In order for councils to request further contribution for off-site play equipment, there must be quantified evidence of a deficiency in play equipment in the vicinity of the site. Residents all know there is no play area in that part of North Hinksey, but there is no 'official evidence' of a deficiency. Officers were asked to consult with Sport England, who said they had no information of their own and would be guided by councils' own surveys about play areas. The Vale has not produced such a survey and has no plans to do so, due to cutbacks on planning staff and all-hands-on-deck to get the IHSP/Core Strategy in place. So in spite of a request by North Hinksey PC for money for local play areas, the developers will be keeping their money in their pockets. Will there be any contribution from the Lime Road developers? I'm concerned.
- 4. Westway (or is it West Way?) re-development.** There is no news. Today I heard from Matt Prosser, 'No great progress to speak of due to legal work on ownerships and rights etc. This can often be a tedious process with these redevelopment projects, in that whilst the lawyers are working very hard there is no material change to report to the scheme.' I'm trying to put in place a better communication plan so we can be updated regularly about what's happening.
- 5. Local info online:** You can easily find current **North Hinksey planning applications** on my councillor blog: www.DebbyHallett.MyCouncillor.org.uk and on my public-facing Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DebbyHallettLD (you don't need to be a registered Facebook user to see this page). I add info as soon as I receive notice of the planning application from the Vale. I include the consultation period, targeted decision date, and a link to the Vale Planning site so readers can see what information about the application has already been received.