

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

6 September 2012

1. **Neighbourhood Plans.** The government announced that it will be awarding grants of up to £30K to help towns and parishes develop their neighbourhood plans. The Localism Act is intended to put more of the decision making about where to build new homes into the hands of local people. Premises of local planning:

- North Hinksey parish will grow over the coming years.
- North Hinksey parish can control how development will happen, via a Neighbourhood Plan.
- If North Hinksey parish opts out of Neighbourhood Plan, the Vale will plan for you.

Given the general dissatisfaction I hear from parish councillors over felt impotence in the face of the Vale planning machine, I strongly urge NHPC to take steps to control where and how development happens in the parish. In July I sent a paper to the NHPC Chairman on this very this subject; contact him for more information. Or contact me.

2. **IHSP and Core Strategy.** The abandoned Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP) and the delay in developing a Core Strategy continues to have knock-on effects for local planning, as developers take advantage of the uncertainty by registering lots of applications. The main criteria for planning approvals in the Vale currently seems to be whether a refusal would be upheld in appeal.

In real terms, we see an increase in applications to replace single family dwellings with flats. This sort of pattern increases neighbourhood density, crowds our streets with parked cars, and changes the nature of our neighbourhoods. Planning policy can address this.

My colleagues and I at the Vale have called an extraordinary council meeting on Thursday 13th September at 7pm to provide a forum for open discussion among towns and parishes. Response has been positive. You will have received an invitation. Please attend if you can and participate.

3. **Boundary Review.** Last month, in spite of my efforts to prevent it, the Vale council voted to recommend to the Boundary Commission a district boundary change that will have a long term effect on North Hinksey parish. If accepted by the Boundary Commission, the new boundary will split off the areas east of the A34 and south of Raleigh Park (including the new Lime Road development) into a district council ward with South Hinksey, Boars Hill and Sunningwell. One of the rules of boundaries is that un-warded parishes may not be split between district wards. So, if the Boundary Commission accepts the proposal, NH parish will need to become a warded parish in the future. That means parish councillors would be elected to represent a small part of the parish (a ward of about 285 electors if it stays as 14 councillors), rather than the whole parish. I am continuing to work to prevent this from happening. (You can see the proposed boundary in the map on my Facebook page, using link below.) Feel free to let me know what you think.

4. **Local info online:** You can easily find current **North Hinksey planning applications** 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.