

Unspent Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money

On the 13th January I spoke on the BBC about unspent S.106 & CIL money across the county. I raised the issue of unspent money for vital infrastructure projects around the county. It has emerged that the Lib Dem and Green administration at OCC is sitting on approximately £260million of unspent developer cash.

This is public money that should be spent on much needed infrastructure like improving our roads, schools and rural GP's surgeries. Furthermore, the Homebuilders Federation is reporting the correct figure could be as high as £287.5million - by far the highest county in the country.

This situation is clearly not acceptable for all of us who continue to endure unwanted speculative developments across the district and county without the necessary infrastructure.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Planning Enquiry Costs £29million

The result of the public inquiry for a £269million road scheme (HIF1) has been announced. The proposals include creating a dual carriageway on the A4130 from the A34 Milton Interchange towards Didcot, new bridges and a Clifton Hampden bypass.

In July 2023 the Secretary of State called in the planning application after OCC applied to itself for planning permission but the OCC planning committee refused it - despite recommendations from officers that it should be approved. Local government minister Matthew Pennycook has now approved the application. The costs associated with this are estimated to be around £1million. This figure does not include the inspector costs, which are not yet known.

The inflationary increase of the construction works due to the delay in commencement is estimated to be 15% which equates to approximately £28million. All because a few councillors on the planning committee essentially voted against their own planning application !

It is my personal view that this is wholly unacceptable and an enormous waste of public money.

Support for Oxfordshire farmers

An Opposition motion in support for Oxfordshire farmers was passed at Full Council on 10 December.

The council has now written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ask that family farm taxes be reconsidered for the sake of environmental protection and food security.