

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM HELD AT SOUTH OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE

TUESDAY 10TH MARCH 2020

1. FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME AND KENNINGTON SOUTHERN BYPASS BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

Richard Harding – Environment Agency

Tim Shickle – Oxfordshire County Council

Flooding continues to be an issue for Oxford and the EA has had to prepare for flood emergencies 3 times this winter although fortunately there hasn't been any property flooding. The FRS is about changing the way water moves through and around the city, protecting vulnerable areas and making full use of the flood plain. The planning application and associated compulsory purchase applications were submitted in March 2018. Objections have been raised and the EA is working to resolve them.

The bridge forms an important part of the scheme and now that the bridge must be replaced (see notes from October 2019 Forum) the EA and the County Council are working on plans for a new bridge which will incorporate more effective culverts as well as wildlife protection measures such as mammal shelves. The estimated cost is now £52 million and whilst funding is being sought from central government the work will have to be carried out regardless of whether this is forthcoming. It is hoped that work will start in 2023 coinciding with the work on the Botley Rd rail bridge by Network Rail and taking advantage of the line closures required for that.

In any event the changes to the FRS caused by the bridge work are probably significant enough to mean that the planning application will have to be resubmitted.

2. POLICE UPDATE

PC Mav Narrainsawmy was unable to attend but provided a written report, see attached.

Cllr Marie Tidball reminded people to always report crime and get an incident number.

3. COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CORONOVIRUS OUTBREAK

The question of how to support the elderly and most vulnerable members of society was being discussed by the City Council. There is also the issue of students and others living in shared accommodation and how to manage self-

isolation. Marie will bring up the question of how best to coordinate a community volunteer response at next planning meeting.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF BERTIE PLACE PARK

Stuart Moran and Alan Wylde for Oxford City Council

This site has been in the local plan for development since 2001 originally as a school but in 2013 when the County Council decided a new school wasn't needed it has been in the local plan as a site for social housing. The proposal is very much in the discussion phase, once a planning application for the proposed 29 -33 new homes was submitted there would be more formal consultations. There were problems with the site – it is liable to flood, and it is former land fill and would need to be capped because of contamination. Trees would also be lost. There was also the question of the number of car parking spaces which would be required taking into account the proximity of the Park and Ride. OCC hope to be ready to submit a planning application by July with a view to work starting before the end of this year. Plans would include a playground for younger children and older children would be catered for with the development of a nature area on land behind Go Outdoors. On a map it is the area behind there between the houses and railway lines.

Whilst the need for new affordable and social housing was acknowledged there was no support for this plan at the Forum and many objections were raised. Why was this site chosen when it is the last green space on the edge of the city? It would mean losing a safe play area where both younger and older children could play with adult supervision; there is a history of ant-social behaviour associated with the proposed new nature area for older children. There are other sites in the city such as unused allotments (apparently allotments are protected from development), and possible sites in Headington were suggested.

Concerns were raised about the impact on the flood risk to the area and the fact that the existing sewage system cannot cope in times of flood. Thames Water don't take flooding into account when assessing the capacity of the sewage system for a new development and this should be looked into.

It was said that if the development did go ahead homes should be built to the highest standard and not minimum requirements and there should be adequate parking

5. HINKSEY OUTDOOR POOL UPDATE

Mike Harrison for Fusion

Work is being done to prepare for the new season with the pool opening on 6th April. The showers are being upgraded.

The pool is different to any other in the city as people can come and stay all day. There is a problem with queuing times; perhaps social media could be used to give real time information. 2 hour booking slots were being introduced.