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Cllr Steve Cook
Heyford Park Parish Council
PO Box 476
Bicester
OX26 9NR

8th April 2025

Dear Cllr Cook,

Following on from the discussions at the Parish Council meetings along with the information collected from the residents' survey undertaken last year outlining key issues and the priorities outlined by the community. We have prepared a formal response outlining what Dorchester have been doing along with what is planned over the coming months.

Oxfordshire County Council roads and commercial traffic

Both Camp Road and the road from the B430 leading to Heyford Park are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council to maintain. As part of the planning for the site all our commercial tenants and construction traffic are required by County to sign a routing agreement requiring all HGVs to access the site via Junction 10 of the M40 and along the B430.

Heyford Park is a significant employer in Cherwell and is home to approximately 100 businesses, employing around 1,000 people. The site contributes significantly towards the local economy along with raising significant local tax revenues through business rates and council tax which should be used to help fund the maintenance of the road networks.

The current planning permission requires all traffic associated with the commercial uses to access the Flying Field via Gate 7 until the new HGV access along Chilgrove Drive is delivered. The current planning permission does not require this until the relevant occupation trigger is reached currently forecast to be in 2028.

We have listened to residents and have spoken to the Parish council and to help alleviate concerns around HGVs within residential areas of Heyford Park we are planning to bring forward the commitments to deliver dedicated access onto the commercial park located on the Flying Field in advance of our S106 commitments. This will bring significant environmental benefits to the residential areas but will require additional funding which we are proposing to bring in via a temporary planning application for additional car storage. This application has now been submitted to Cherwell and the approval of this application will bring forward other benefits such as introducing a freight management strategy for the site including using technology such as an ANPR to allow better tracking of HGV movements.

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Estate Roads

We have now identified the roads that require additional works to bring them up to an acceptable standard and to create a program of works for these to be rectified.

- Harris Road/Carswell Circle (Existing residential estate) – Repairs have been identified and will commence within the next month.
- Howard Road/Wilson Road/Dow Street – Completion of the surfacing works will be by the end of Q3 2025.
- McGuire Road – Completion of the surfacing works are programmed to be concluded by the end Q4 2025 – subject to funding (this impacts commercial only)
- Gordon Road – This road fall within the responsibility of Bovis Homes/Vistry Group. We understand that some temporary repairs have been carried out whilst they scope the full extent of the repairs required. We have been pushing them to carry out these works for around a year.

There are some other issues with other private drives/roads under the responsibility of Bovis to deliver which has meant that some of Bovis affordable properties are not properly served with appropriate roads. We have found it difficult to get engagement with Bovis and would appreciate you writing to them as well to get these outstanding items resolved – in the meantime we will forward your letter to them outlining the concerns. Our contact has been with Stephen Brown (Stephen.Brown@vistry.co.uk).

Speeding

The new roads have been designed in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council to 20mph design speeds to ensure lower speeds. We have also supported the installation of radar speed limit signs. As you will be aware we are unable to police speeding on site but would support any actions to encourage reduced speeds on site. It may be that we should jointly approach Thames Valley Police to see if we could have a speed reduction initiative.

Public Transport

We are aware of the concerns around the reliability of the current bus service operator Red Rose and are disappointed that even with our significant financial contributions to the County, there is not an acceptable service. Under the S106 agreement for the site we have agreed contributions to the bus service targeting a 20-minute service during the build out of the current consents.

The tender process is the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council however we have shared our concerns with the County and have had several meetings with both them and Red Rose about improving the service. We understand that Red Rose have procured a new bus dedicated to the 25 route. In the background we have also been discussing with the County about the possibility of taking the bus service in-house as we recognize the importance of the service and are exploring the possibility of linking to Heyford train station to improve the onward connectivity to Oxford. You will be aware

that the withdrawal of County funding for bus services has led to cuts in rural services in particular. The choice of concentrating the Bus service to Bicester was taken following consultation with the County to provide a better service, and also a service that provide onwards services to Oxford via Buses and Trains. However, if we can work with OCC to release bus contributions to implement a shuttle bus service to Heyford Station we can significantly improve journey times into Oxford. Alternatively, we can try and fund the service through our service charge, but this will require the consent of the residents which we would need to jointly work together on.

Community

We have heard the communities' concerns over the lack of facilities for teenagers and are in the process of working up a scheme to change one of the planned tennis courts to become a pump track along with a MUGA (multi-use games area) which is programmed for delivery this summer in line with our build sequence. In the immediate term, we are installing an outdoor table football and table tennis tables.

We are also supporting community initiatives by providing space for the Heyford Makers Shed and the Community Hub to help provide activities to help reduce social isolation and help community cohesion. We support the Heyford Park Social committee and other social groups to provide events in the community. We are working closely with Community First Oxfordshire and the Heyford Park community worker to get a better understanding of the community requirements across Heyford Park.

The new Community Centre is an obligation under the Hybrid planning consent and is linked to the number of occupations. The Centre is required to be open by 340th occupation under the new consent. To date we have occupied circa 75 properties and would therefore anticipate constructing the new building by 2027 in line with our planned delivery trajectory and would point out that this is not yet delayed as suggested in your letter. In the meantime, we have instructed refurbishment works to the existing community Centre and Chapel which start on the 8th May.

Masterplan

As you are aware we are progressing a planning application to secure a long-term vision for Heyford Park. The preparation of the planning application is progressing well and is on target for submission to Cherwell District Council in June. We have appointed a leading group of consultants to prepare the planning application led by award winning architects Proctor & Matthews. We have workstreams progressing on various topics including transport, heritage, ecology, energy/net zero, and community services.

The proposals are for a new sustainable development with a focus on net zero on all aspects of the development including utilizing renewable technologies such as wind and solar. Reducing the reliance on the use of private cars by making sure that sustainable modes of transport of phased along with creating attractive active travel routes across the development.

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In respect of transport a lot of work has been going on creating a vision led scheme focusing on sustainable transport and reducing the reliance on cars to help meet the Counties Net Zero ambitions. We have been working with GWR on improving the existing Heyford Station along Chiltern Railways for a new station on the site of the disused Ardley Station. We have been in discussions with a company called Ohmio (https://ohmio.com/) about having a potential trial for driverless shuttle busses to and from Heyford Station along with active travel links by improving the Canal Towpath.

We have listened to the requests of residents following the initial public consultation last September and incorporated significant community infrastructure. This will include new education facilities, community buildings including a Parish Office and hall space. We are holding a further public consultation event with our architects and transport consultants in attendance on Sunday 13th April.

Heyford Works Checklist

Work Stream	Time Frame
Existing estate roads potholes	31/04/2025
Howard/Wilson/Dow Street	31/09/2025
McGuire Road	31/12/2025
Table Football	30/06/2025
Table Tennis	31/05/2025
Pump Track	TBC
Community Centre Decoration	31/05/2025

We would welcome a meeting to discuss these issues further, and if you could suggest some dates we will set up at our end.

Yours sincerely

Paul Silver

CEO