

## ADDENDUM ANNEX A

Monday, 18 September 2017

Dear Cllr Hudspeth,

**RE: Cabinet 19th September 2017, Agenda Item 8 -**

### **Submission of Expression of Interest to the Housing Infrastructure Fund**

I write to urge Cabinet to express interest in the HIF programme as laid out in the above report at tomorrow's meeting. May I start by congratulating the Council for the work that has led to this report being brought forward.

I have campaigned over the last year for improvements to the A40 running between Witney and Oxford, which is not only a source of significant frustration to residents, but significantly restricts the economic potential of this dynamic area. There is no doubt that this is one of the most important issues facing West Oxfordshire, and this bid offers a very good chance of securing the investment we need from Government.

This Government has listened to concerns expressed by myself and others not only over the adequacy of transport routes such as the A40 as they exist now, but over the capacity of West Oxfordshire's infrastructure to cope with housing that is already planned. Currently, the projected growth in jobs and housing risks making the situation much worse, and it is essential that action is taken.

HIF is part of a multi-faceted response developed by the Government, and was announced in July this year as a programme of investment operated by the HCA under the aegis of DCLG.

I am pleased therefore to see that the OCC report includes a £135.4m bid for upgrades to the A40, building on existing schemes and based on the approved A40 Long Term Strategy, and that this would be used to support the delivery of homes planned in Witney, Carterton and around Eynsham.

Additionally, whilst the "north of Oxford" scheme falls outside my constituency, its effects would be of great importance to my constituents in the Woodstock area, particularly the public transport infrastructure schemes that are proposed.

Whilst, naturally, my preference would be for the scheme benefitting West Oxfordshire to be prioritised first - and I would ask for this to be considered (in contrast to para 37, but in line with para 39) - what is of overwhelming importance in any event is for all local Councils to come together to make this bid and to secure the money offered by the HIF for the whole of Oxfordshire. The HIF offers the potential to unlock funding to deliver major infrastructure upgrades in precisely the places - like the A40 - where they are most needed.

It is of note that my constituency's District Council, West Oxfordshire, is also supportive of this bid, which offers an opportunity for the two Councils to continue to work closely together for the benefit of all in the area. The Government has listened to concerns that have been expressed and has acted - it is incumbent upon all of us now to work together to ensure that we make the most of the opportunity that the HIF represents.

Unfortunately pre-existing commitments prevents my attending Cabinet in person as I would have liked, but I hope that you will take my support as expressed in this letter into account when you consider this agenda item tomorrow.

I look forward to continuing to work with Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council to bring this scheme to fruition in the future, and continue to assist as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



**ROBERT COURTS, Member of Parliament for Witney & West Oxfordshire**