

Didcot Garden Town

Note of Advisory Board meeting on Microsoft Teams 26 January 2026, 10 to 12noon

ATTENDANCE:

Board Members

Chair: Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council
Bethia Thomas, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council
Helen Pighills, Cabinet Member for Vale of White Horse District Council
Tony Worgan, obo. Leader, Cabinet Member for South Oxfordshire District Council
Anne Marie Simpson, Cabinet member for South Oxfordshire District Council
Kelly-Marie Morrison, Leader of Didcot Town Council
Rita Atkinson, Chairman of Sutton Courtenay Parish Council
David Pryor, Chair of Didcot First

Garden Communities team, South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District Councils

Nicky Wyer, Garden Communities Team Leader
Charlotte Cottingham, Didcot Garden Town Programme Manager
Emma East, Didcot Garden Town Project Manager
Dionne Freeman, Didcot Garden Town Project Officer

Other attendees – South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Jayne Bolton, Community Wellbeing Manager
Phil Barker, Head of Communities
Carmella Anderson, Leisure Development Officer

Other attendees – Oxfordshire County Council

Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Oxfordshire County Council
Mark Gregory, Team Leader for Behaviour Change and Travel Plans
Julia Hawkins, Operations Manager Placemaking & Transport
Timothy Mann, Programme Lead updating on the HIF1 scheme
Karina Santiago, Senior Transport Planner – South and Vale

Other attendees – Didcot Town Council

Janet Wheeler, Town Clerk for Didcot Town Council
Andrea Bridgeman, Project Manager Construction & Asset Manager
Tom Rice, Planning Infrastructure Team Leader

Other attendees:

Ella Langham – member of public

APOLOGIES:

Sian Carter (SC), Senior Partnership & Business Development Manager Homes England
Nigel Tipple, CEO Enterprise Oxfordshire England, Communities team
Lenka Devereux, Community Wellbeing Business Support Officer

1.	Introductions and apologies - apologies noted above. Councillor Leffman noted that Councillor Rouane, is no longer attending these meetings, having stepped down as Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council. On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed thanks to Councillor Rouane for his contribution and work over the years.
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	<p>Councillor Worgan confirmed that will be attending on behalf of the newly appointed Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council, Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers.</p> <p>Declarations and conflicts of interest - none</p>
2.	<p>Public participation – one member of public in attendance, who did not submit any questions for the meeting.</p>
3.	<p>Actions from previous meeting on 20 October 2025 and matters arising</p> <p>The Chair reviewed the actions arising from the previous meeting, and the following update was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didcot Garden Town team to report to the January Advisory Board on implementation of the Cow Lane underpass public art and the wayfinding scheme. Agenda Item • District councils' Development and Corporate Landlord team to share with Didcot Town Council information on s106 commuted sums for Great Western Park land transfers. In progress • Didcot Garden Town team to contact Ladygrove Park Run organisers to ensure the designs are compatible with that use. Completed • Didcot Garden Town team to liaise with Oxfordshire County Council to request path repair and maintenance in Ladygrove is prioritised. Completed • Oxfordshire County Council to clarify whether assumptions are made in the Paramics modelling about changes to driver behaviour. Completed • Oxfordshire County Council to feed back to the highway team the importance of including parish councils in decision making going forward. Completed • Cllr Roberts to contact Highways Coordination Team about setting up a possible new working group to include DP, RA and BT with on-going Highways infrastructure projects and parish council involvement as the focus. In progress <p>New actions from 26 January 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didcot Garden Town team to check whose responsibility it is to empty the bin overflowing with poo bags at Hagbourne Triangle Bridge and report it. • David Pryor to provide an update on flooding at Moorbrook, Milton Park at the next meeting and share formal notes with Cllr Rita Atkinson.
4.	<p>Didcot Garden Town projects quarterly update</p> <p>SMART dashboard tracker circulated prior to the meeting provides quarterly updates for all Didcot Garden Town projects. The Didcot Garden Town team presented slides that gave more detailed information on project progress. These slides will be circulated and included on the Didcot Garden Town website after the Board meeting, so the notes below do not duplicate that information.</p> <p>The projects discussed were:</p>

- **Healthy Didcot Action Plan**

- **Green infrastructure Zone 1** (Central Didcot)

- **Green infrastructure Zone 2** (Ladygrove)

Councillor Worgan raised concerns about the condition of the Ladygrove path known as the 'Yellow Brick Road' being hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists. Emma East confirmed the issue has been inspected, photographed and reported to Oxfordshire County Council's Fix My Street website for action.

- **Green infrastructure Zone 3** (Southeast Didcot)

David Pryor highlighted an overflowing dog waste bin in this area, Emma East advised to report this issue to fix my street website. Please see new action above.

- **Green infrastructure Zone 4** (Millennium Wood, Mowbray Fields Nature Reserve, the bound gravel path around Great Western Park to Sir Frank Williams Avenue)

- **Wayfinding**

- **Public Art**

Noted that window art by Raphael Daden is now installed at the station. Efforts are being made to visually connect all the Didcot public art projects with local heritage and community identity.

Cow Lane underpass art - Councillor Morrison raised questions from a resident regarding the maintenance of the artwork as well as pedestrian access during installation. Dionne Freeman confirmed that a small maintenance budget is in place and that footpath closures will be minimised, scheduled outside rush hours where possible, with any disruption expected to last only a few days.

Dionne Freeman confirmed public notice will be given in advance of essential road and footpath closure at Cow Lane underpass to clean the underpass and install the art works. The team has procured a Traffic Management Plan and is liaising with Oxfordshire County Council and Network Rail who own the bridge. The closures will seek to avoid busy periods and, while the road may close for several days it is expected to close the footpath for just one day.

- **Legacy and stewardship** - future legacy and stewardship options appraisal will be presented at an upcoming Advisory Board meeting.

Community Update Meeting – next one is Wednesday 18 March, a drop-in event from 5 to 7.30 pm at the Cornerstone Arts Centre. The following one will be scheduled for September 2026.

5. Oxfordshire County Council projects quarterly update

Mark Gregory, Team Leader for Behaviour Change and Travel Plans at Oxfordshire County Council, provided the following update:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Engagement – working with schools to develop a School Travel Plan • School Streets Programme - timed road closure at school pickup and drop off time in consultation with local community, exempt to residents and carers who need access. Didcot has one school street at Manor School, with a second scheme approved. The new school street will focus on Willowcroft Primary School and St Birinus Secondary School, and due to the need to back and front entrances and the park and walk area, is one of the largest schemes in the county. <p>Mark Gregory confirmed the School Streets operate as a timed restriction on entering the zone, with free exemptions for residents and licensed taxis. Access to Didcot Leisure Centre will remain available outside school hours, and visitor exemptions are available through the controlled parking system.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding the number of Didcot schools participating in the walking and cycling to school accreditation scheme. Mark Gregory advised that engagement is ongoing with Manor, St Birinus, Willowcroft, All Saints, Northbourne, Stephen Freeman, Aureus, and Sutton Courtenay schools. Additional schools are welcome to participate, provided there is a named governor, parent, or senior leadership representative to work collaboratively on developing a school travel plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIF1 Scheme <p>Tim Mann, OCC Programme Lead provided an update on the HIF1 scheme including on recent and ongoing communications. Drop-in sessions were held in the autumn, and an electronic newsletter has now been launched, which members can sign up for.</p> <p>Councillor Worgan declared an interest as he works for Network Rail and is involved in planning engineering closures but confirmed he has no financial interest in the scheme. He raised concerns about keeping key routes, especially the A4130 and A34, clear during works and asked for consideration of the bus gate at Great Western Park during closures. Tim Mann confirmed these points will be discussed with the Street Works team.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by some members and others about local parishes feeling left out of communications. Councillor Leffman suggested revisiting the idea of a working group with districts and parishes to ensure everyone is kept informed.</p> <p>Janet Wheeler raised concerns about traffic queues on the A4130, asking if the HIF1 scheme would be dual carriageway all the way. Tim Mann confirmed only the section to the Science Bridge will be dual carriageway; the rest remains single.</p>
6.	<p>Didcot Town Council projects quarterly update</p> <p>Janet Wheeler provided an overview of Didcot Town Council’s activities and assets, which is shown in the slide pack to be shared after the meeting.</p> <p>Didcot Town Council manages six buildings (soon to be seven with addition of Northbrook Community Centre), five allotment sites (expanding by three), seven</p>

	<p>play parks (potentially nine), football pitches, Ladygrove Lakes, Millennium Woods, a skate park, tennis courts, memorial gardens, and a splash pad.</p> <p>Lucy Blake will provide updates at the next meeting on Didcot Town Council’s Healthy Didcot initiatives, including improved Broadway planters and a therapeutic trampoline at Willowbrook for charity groups like Style Acre.</p> <p>David Pryor suggested updating the “Welcome to Historic Didcot” signs to better reflect the town’s modern, science-focused image. Councillor Worgan confirmed £20,000 is budgeted next year to replace the signs.</p> <p>David Pryor reported a meeting this week with the Environment Agency, Thames Water, OCC, businesses, and developers to address flooding at Moorbrook. Milton Park and RWE raised concerns about business disruption. Further updates will be provided at the April meeting. Cllr Roberts would attend if possible.</p> <p>Councillor Atkinson highlighted that much of the land involved in the Moorbrook flooding issues falls within Sutton Courtney Parish and requested formal notes from the Didcot First meeting to understand potential impacts on the parish.</p>
7.	<p>Advisory Board and Community Update Meeting dates 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 18 March 5-7.30pm Community Update Meeting (drop-in event at Cornerstone Arts Centre) • Monday 20 April 2026 at 10am Advisory Board (online) • Monday 20 July at 10am Advisory Board (online) • September Community Update Meeting (tbc) • Monday 19 October at 10am Advisory Board (online)