

Campbell Gregg
Managing Director
David Wilson Homes Southern
Cygnet House
Cygnet Way
Charnham Park
Hungerford
RG17 0YL

02 September 2025

Dear Mr Gregg

Abbey Fields Abingdon Development

Vale of White Horse District Council – Planning Permission P17/V0050/O - Land north of Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive Abingdon - Formal complaint on inability to implement Highways Package 5 of the S106 Agreement

As Chair of Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council Planning Committee, I am writing to you on behalf of the residents and Town Council of Abingdon-on-Thames to ask for your help, as Managing Director of David Wilson Homes Southern, to finally complete this work.

I do wish to register the strongest possible formal complaint over the continued lack of progress and mismanagement over a period of approximately 21 months and 3 attempts to complete these highways works, and the accompanying S104 Agreement connection.

These are normal works associated with developments of this scale, that residents and Councillors would expect a major national housebuilder to take in their stride and effectively and efficiently deliver.

We all accept a period of traffic disruption has to accompany works of this nature. However, having to endure 3 abortive attempts, with a fourth period due and what appears to be a total lack of communication to other parties involved, the impression given to all of us is one of total mismanagement and lack of any care for the local community by David Wilson Homes and Hope & Clay.

I do not intend to cover what the works specified are, as I've attached a copy of the relevant Planning Decision from Vale of White Horse Planning, the Highways Package 5 wording from the S106 schedule plus the relevant S278 Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council for your reference.

Location and key importance to Abingdon of the work location

1. Oxford Road Abingdon is the prime route from the A34 to the town centre and roundabout intersection with Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive that form a northern ring road round Abingdon.
2. Oxford Road supports Oxford Bus Company's highest used routes to the town for work, shopping and the direct link between the John Radcliffe Hospital and the town.
3. Consequently Oxford Road has some of the busiest bus stops on the whole route which are used by a significant number of older residents. The nearest alternative stops add several hundred metres walk for those older residents.
4. Oxford Road also has one of our busiest existing active travel routes crossing it, controlled by a Toucan crossing in close proximity to the works area. This leads to a primary school, busy GP and Pharmacy and a very well booked and used Community Centre.
5. Dunmore Road has a Bus Service linking all your new developments in North Abingdon to the town centre, Oxford, Witney and Wantage offering travel to Abingdon's Fairacres shops and Tesco Superstore. This service is now well used and still getting busier.
6. So keeping to the work schedule and ensuring quality active traffic management are essential.
7. The overall roundabout improvements package aims to improve flows helping existing residents and all the new residents of your developments.

Works chronology

2024 - First attempt

1. Works commenced to run until approximately September 2024 to complete all Highways and S104 package and all went well until late April/early May 2024 when all work ceased.
2. At a Vale of White Horse Developer Forum meeting in late May 2024, County, District and Town Councillors found out from your Technical Director that a legacy legal issue dating back to Wates Homes building estates and roads in the mid 1980s identified by Thames Water meant they required Wates to be a party to the S104 Agreement to connect to their network. It's not clear why this would not have shown till then or why the S104 Agreement request appears to have happened while work was already underway.
3. This eventually got resolved following delays at Thames Water legal team but road space and work plan was then needed and 2025 reached.

2025 – Second attempt – commenced late April

1. Starting work was delayed as the project delay now meant Lodge Hill A34 improvements were about to start within a mile of the location so causing the least disruption over as short a timescale as possible was needed.
2. Work progressed slowly due to a deeper trench being worked but then stopped by early June. No workforce but trench, traffic lights, single lane working, suspended bus stops and no pedestrian crossing, reinstated or temporary, in place.
3. Your Technical Director replied very promptly within 24 hours to an email asking what was happening, advising the work had uncovered a pipe not shown on services plans, so an alternative plan had to be agreed with Thames Water. This was on the 8th & 9th June.
4. On Thursday 19th June with no plan in place County Highways revoked permit requesting the road be reinstated until an alternative robust scheme could be agreed.
5. During this attempt manned Traffic Management 07:00 to 20:00 daily was required. This seemed to disappear once work stopped, so on both the 6th & 8th June our local County Councillor intervened when passing, firstly to help a confused elderly resident with a wheeled walker cross the road, and on the 8th report the lights being out. On that occasion traffic from both directions had met in the middle of the open lane. Apparently Traffic Management said they had logs stating someone was there but we know they weren't as was the case on several other occasions too.
6. No temporary pedestrian lights were ever provided although Hope and Clay said they would be provided by 6th and then 9th June.

2025 – Third attempt – Permit 7th July to 22nd August

1. The work plan was to complete any traffic light controlled works by Friday 22nd August by using 2 work teams working simultaneously on the trench. Manned Traffic Management 07:00 to 19:00 daily with a temporary pedestrian crossing provided.
2. This would avoid having single lane working when the summer holidays finished due to the very high traffic volumes, as already stated, in that area.
3. County Highways had given a 2 day free Licence for Hope and Clay to do Ground Penetrating Radar surveys to ensure a robust no surprises plan was in place.
4. Work appeared to be going very well until 12th July when the lights failed again, no Traffic Manager present and the County Councillor stepped in again due to contact James Hope directly as public trying the Hope and Clay number got no reply, so contacted the Councillor to complain.
5. Traffic lights failed again Sunday 20th July and once again no Traffic Management operative on site. No one was present on both August 8th and 9th again when I went past so on both occasions I checked again later in the day, still no on site presence.

6. On August 11th I questioned progress on the work with Highways Officers as it appeared very unlikely to be completed by 22nd August.
7. Friday 15th August it was confirmed to Councillors that 2 pipes had been found that the radar survey hadn't revealed and that Southern Gas Networks and Thames Water were disputing were theirs so once again the permit was revoked by County Highways and the road reinstated.

Current works position

A new plan has to be agreed, the Oxford Road will have to be dug up again but now it will both be post holidays with maximum traffic flows, and at the same time that Lodge Hill A34 south facing slip roads start construction of roundabouts and carriageways.

Other Highways Package works for Toucan crossings, active travel routes and other new bus stops are also all on hold until your work can be completed, further disadvantaging residents of new and existing housing alike, which is also unacceptable.

This is the position that Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council had wanted to avoid all along as those that suffer most are our residents. Ironically, a lot of the nearest ones are those that have recently bought David Wilson Homes.

Residents using public transport in that area have suffered congestion delays and for some older residents loss of service if they are unable to walk the additional distance to a stop when theirs is closed so wish to see a speedy final solution.

S278 Agreement Terms and Conditions

A copy of the Agreement is attached and I have highlighted several sections for ease. These appear to state that no properties on any of the Meadow Rise part of the Abbey Fields Development should have been occupied until this Highways Package was complete and that certain timescales should be met, which they have not.

I cannot trace a variation online, hence copying this letter to the Head of Planning Service and the Cabinet Member for Planning Development at the Vale of White Horse District Council and the Cabinet Member for Transport Management at Oxfordshire County Council to seek their views and guidance.

Conclusion

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council asks that this situation now be given the most urgent attention to implement a robust, successful and speedy conclusion, to minimise further upset and disruption to our now very long suffering residents.

It would be fair to say that from comments I've seen residents do not consider David Wilson and Hope and Clay to have done anything other than oversee a recurring farce with no care for them or their circumstances.

Currently, I am sorry to say that I agree with them when reviewing the events laid out here.

Due to regular road permit breaches and what appears to be a significant breach of the S278 Agreement Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council are calling for all further housing occupations to be paused with immediate effect until Highways Package 5 is successfully and finally complete.

I look forward to urgently hearing your views and solutions offered to get this resolved once and for all please.

In view of how seriously the Council view this situation and our occupations request this letter is also copied to Rt Hon Layla Moran MP for Oxford West and Abingdon.

Yours sincerely

Mark Giddins

Mark S Giddins

Chair Planning Committee

cc:

Rt Hon Layla Moran MP

Cllr Emily Smith, Cabinet Member Planning & Development Vale of White Horse District Council

Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning Vale of White Horse District Council

Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Oxfordshire County Council