

Six points (with supporting details) for the WODC Garden Village Area Action Plan Issues Paper consultation – deadline August 3rd 2018

The following six points have been compiled by the *Eynsham Planning and Improvement Campaign* (EPIC) team for you to consider when writing your response to the WODC [planning issues paper](#) for the Garden Village Area Action Plan [consultation](#). Some or all of these points might form a useful basis for your letter. You might also want to raise your own ideas, thoughts and suggestions.

1. **The Area Action Plan (AAP) for the garden village (GV) should consider impacts & improvements to the Parish as a whole and to special qualities of Eynsham and its surroundings:**
 - a. ***The GV is planned together with west Eynsham*** and considers the impacts and improvements to the parish as a whole, including the existing ancient settlements
 - b. ***The developments should enhance and complement, rather than disrupt Eynsham's special qualities***- the ability to walk to good independent shops, good schools, doctors and other services, easy access to countryside and greenspace. Therefore, nuclear design of Eynsham with its surrounding accessible countryside for all should be a model for the GV.
 - c. ***Local constraints are thoroughly investigated*** – ancient settlement sites, extraordinary biodiversity, flood risk in wet periods/water stress in times of drought, quality of existing farmland, listed buildings and aggregate recycling plant in the centre of the site.
 - d. ***Distinctive, significant local characteristics are protected and celebrated*** - biodiversity at City farm, organic farming, history of apple breeding and community gardening, community energy, history of settlement including Tilgarsley, the Abbey and medieval and earlier land use on the north and west of Eynsham
 - e. ***Eynsham residents must be compensated for loss*** of the countryside on the north, for being hemmed in with new, busy roads and countryside to the West must be protected. WODC suggests compensation that we find unsatisfactory - the linear park idea for walking, running and cycling for well-being and health does not compensate and is insufficient because the connecting field south of the Chil is to be built on. We do not need allotments (we already have them) and we need our own new facilities, eg a swimming pool, a refurbished primary school and funding for providing extra facilities for GV students attending Bartholomew secondary school, a new burial ground and better recycling arrangement in car park.
 - f. ***The GV must be based upon an extensive green network*** of trees, wide hedges and green parks in order to encourage biodiversity.
 - g. ***The AAP must enforce the highest standards*** of zero carbon construction and creative design and requires an innovative approach to energy use and production producing clean energy to benefit the whole of Eynsham parish. The village must be a net exporter of community renewable energy.
 - h. ***Sustainability provisos incorporated in the Planning Permission must be legally enforceable*** and should be completed where possible before house building begins.
 - i. ***The AAP should draw on the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) more carefully in terms of Eynsham residents' views*** on housing, connectivity, transport, educational and medical facilities, biodiversity and energy reduction and creation. This is the best, most detailed and representative evidence available and should not be ignored. It was gathered over a two-year period and was used to develop the ENP. Evidence gathered by WODC and Grosvenor from Eynsham residents is minimal by comparison.
 - j. ***The GV is planned with active involvement of local groups and is community owned and managed with land value capture*** (see (k) below) to benefit the whole parish of Eynsham and

provide **guaranteed genuinely affordable housing options** for rent/purchase/shared ownership/self build etc in an open and integrated community

- k. **Lipstick on a pig** - The proposed development is just another speculative development dressed up with fine words. The enhanced land value accruing to the land owners is socially created and should be socially used. If the GV is built, it should be under the auspices of a community trust. The surplus land value would then be invested in better facilities for the GV and Eynsham, and would help resolve collateral transport, community and environmental problems.
- l. **Eynsham residents should have their elected representatives (Eynsham Parish Council and District Councillors) and other key stakeholders sitting at the table where high level decisions are made.** Until new residents are established in the GV, Eynsham residents should be represented in the management of the site.
- m. **One Parish or two? The pros and cons of each option should be investigated thoroughly.** There is confusion in the WODC and in the community about whether the GV should have its own Parish Council. This could mean an extra £1million for the GV, leaving Eynsham bearing the strain of the new development with no extra resources, but Eynsham would maintain its separateness in terms of local governance. If the GV stays within Eynsham parish, then new resources made available could be used to support for example, Eynsham Primary School.

2. Increase in traffic congestion & air pollution vs innovative, environmentally friendly transport systems:

- a. **The heavy impact on the transport network, especially A40, of the building of 2200 homes combined with 1000 homes to be built on the west of Eynsham and other developments further west** in the district must be addressed in a more comprehensive and meaningful way than demonstrated at present. This impact will not be accommodated or mitigated by any of the proposed 'improvements' to the A40. Quite the contrary. In addition, proposals for new roundabouts along the Eynsham stretch of the main road will further tighten the bottleneck here.
- b. **Unustainable Travel** - A40 corridor serves Eynsham, Witney, Carterton and the settlements of West Oxfordshire. The proposed GV and the strategic development of West Eynsham must be considered with the proposed growth along this corridor and with Oxford North (Oxford Gateway).
Witney is the only Growth Town without a rail or segregated busway connection to Oxford.
- c. **Until the strategic network problems have been resolved, housing development should be restricted.** The A40 is already heavily congested with the attendant financial, amenity, environmental and time costs.
The proposed Park and Ride and bus lane are insufficient for current and future travel demand. About 70% of eastbound traffic does not go the central Oxford. Access to Headington and East Oxford would still be difficult by public transport. There are no proposals for improved public transport over the Toll Bridge.
- d. **Solutions need to be in place well before the new homes are ready for occupation** - Bus lanes, dual carriageway and light railway, plentiful safe crossings created for pedestrians and cyclists, especially to access secondary education, as well as mobility vehicles and horses - otherwise chaos and gridlock will be created for everyone who uses the A40. Air pollution tests should be carried out. Existing houses backing onto the A40 to have sound-proof barriers and extra tree planting to protect them from noise and air pollution.
- e. **There must be maximum transport provision for foot, cycle, bus and railway transport, with active discouragement of cars.** This would prevent the complete commuter gridlock which will otherwise ensue.

3. Housing expansion and types:

- a. ***The proposed GV and West Eynsham are too big for Eynsham to absorb successfully.*** No other settlement in Oxfordshire has had such a disproportionately large proposed growth in relation to its existing population. The increased population would be inequitably out of scale, and the period for development too short.
- b. ***Eynsham said it would welcome 750 new homes for local and district needs,*** in itself an unprecedented expansion of the village, which would need careful management. The 3,200 homes for north and west of the village, arbitrarily imposed by WODC, represent too great and too rapid an expansion that will overwhelm the village community and deprive it of its character, identity and cohesion.
- c. ***The 50% affordable houses should have a strong element of social rented and shared ownership to help those on low incomes.*** However, the 20% discount on market value will put homes out of reach for many people as the ***starting market prices will be too high in this area.***
- d. ***Prices and rental must be genuinely affordable for people on low incomes, for single people, first time buyers.*** The housing stock should include, for example, studio apartments, 1/2/3 bedroom houses and apartments, co-housing, sheltered accommodation, downsizing homes for those who live in big houses in Eynsham. Four/five bedroom homes are not required. Housing should be high density with small private gardens which leaves open countryside around the GV for new and existing residents to enjoy.

4. The developments should improve aspects already under stress - educational and medical facilities, transport, public green space and burial ground:

- a. ***There is a risk that necessary investment in Eynsham schools could be diverted to the educational facilities planned for the GV.*** In addition, these facilities will take some time to be up and running, if indeed they are not downgraded as a result of 'viability considerations'. In the meantime, ***the strain on existing Eynsham schools will be intense.*** Thereafter, a potential split school site will entail a dangerous road crossing for pupils. The same is true of medical facilities.
- b. ***Primary Schools and Medical centre in the GV must be built and ready before first occupation of the homes.*** Eynsham School will have no capacity. The last places will be consumed by the 160 homes permitted at Thornbury Road and the 77 at Old Witney Road
- c. Innovative and environmentally friendly transport solutions (with major economic and health benefits), health and education, burial space, public greenspace should be improved

5. Access to countryside reduced vs generous green space required:

- a. ***Pedestrians, cyclists, mobility vehicle and horse-riders from Eynsham will find themselves distanced from the countryside by the new developments, their nearby open land greatly reduced in size, and their access to it made unpleasant*** and offputting by the need to negotiate what will effectively be a busy 360° ring-road, and in places a six-lane highway (A40 'improvements').
- b. ***Green space provision in the developed area must be generous and have cast iron scheme for future management, preferably by the Parish Council, built in to the AAP.*** Making built up areas denser and built around a pleasant village green or square and allowing more green space around the edges of the new village would echo Eynsham as a nucleic settlement. Houses could have good sized rear gardens but small or no front ones as in most of Eynsham. This design would also allow more space between the 2 settlements and make the GV a truly separate village.

6. Avoid loss of valuable farmland & biodiversity & prevent harm to heritage assets:

- a. ***Loss of valuable farmland and biodiversity should be avoided.*** The land north of Eynsham has areas of “best and most versatile” agricultural land thanks to decades of non-intensive farming, and a particularly rich mix of habitats and wildlife. These should be exempt from development.
- b. ***Avoid loss of valuable farmland where biodiversity is at a high level.*** The fields around City Farm are the most special being part of the Site of European Importance. Some would fall into the 500m setting of the Listed Buildings at City Farm.
- c. ***Avoid harm to heritage assets-***
 - i. City Farm Listed (Grade 2) Buildings need a generous area of open farmland- say 400m to 500m radius- as their setting. NB the Planning Inspector (WG Fabian on 16 May 2016) decided to dismiss an appeal against refusal of planning consent for a development of 49 dwellings on the Litchfield- Land off Station Road, Eynsham. The whole site was considered to be part of the setting of the Listed (Grade 2) Abbey Farm Barn. From the barn to the furthestmost boundary of the Appeal site is a distance of 400m or more.
 - ii. The site of Tilgarsley Deserted Medieval Village needs archaeological investigation and conservation. Its setting with medieval field systems needs protecting as well- say a 400m radius.
 - iii. The ancient trackways- the Salt Way running north/south and the boundary track running east/west need protection with bands of green space on either side.