

WOLP31 Hearing Stage 3

Matter 14 - Eynsham- Woodstock Sub-Area

14.1 Eynsham – Woodstock Sub – Area Strategy - Policy EW2

The strategy is not positively prepared, justified and effective in relation to the 2 Eynsham SDAs.

Oxford City's Unmet Housing Need (OCUHN)

The decision to follow the advice of the Oxfordshire Growth Board Spatial Options Assessment (the LUC report) without question and allocate only large sites (over 500 homes) and concentrate all of these in and next to Eynsham was **not positively prepared and justified**. Other options such as spreading the 2750 homes amongst smaller sites combined with a reduced number at Eynsham would have been “reasonable and consistent with achieving sustainable development” (NPPF 182). These options were not explored at all. This could have given prospective Oxford residents greater choice and required less new infrastructure by using extensions to existing settlements. For example, Long Hanborough has SHELAA sites (#170 and 449) capable of providing 320 homes and with quick easy access to Oxford by train making it a very sustainable location.

The WOGV site selection

This was **not justified**. It did not consider enough reasonable alternatives. Having decided to plan a new Garden Village (GV) settlement to take 2200 homes, WODC only looked at the 2 locations assessed in the LUC report - one north of A40 at Barnard Gate (which was rejected) and the WOGV north of Eynsham. They should at this stage have put out a specific call for suitable sites for such a large GV to widen the options and allow for the best possible choice of location. This they failed to do and only later, once their choice had been made, did an alternative site come forward at Barnard Gate south of the A40, also close to Eynsham with quick access to A40 and Oxford and equally capable of delivering all the requirements of a GV, Science Park and Park and Ride. This site and the WOGV site should now be thoroughly assessed and compared and the best site for the GV chosen on its merits alone.

This is especially important as the WOGV site has major impediments, which WODC have overlooked, to achieving the housing target of 2200 homes by 2031, with room to grow beyond the plan period. These are described in detail in our Hearing Statement for Matter 14.4 and they were not considered by WODC when they prepared their Expression of Interest (E of I) to DCLG for GV status nor when they prepared the strategy in Policy EW2.

The impediments render the Strategy **ineffective** by reducing considerably the amount of land available for Housing. There is a real risk that the site will fail to deliver the 2200 plus houses needed.

The issues were not considered as they should have been by WODC because the LUC report, which was the basis of the choice of WOGV, did not cover the northern part of the WOGV

site where the heritage assets of Tilgarsley Deserted Medieval Village and the Grade 11 Listed buildings at City Farm are located. These heritage assets need their settings preserved. WODC enlarged the site when they submitted their Eof I.

As a consequence, WODC also failed to properly assess the problems of flooding from the stream on the northern boundary of the GV site.

They also neglected to make any assessment of the nature of the Aggregate Recycling Site including the need for a buffer zone to protect new homes from noise, dust and pollution.

The WOGV site is also **not properly justified or effective**. It is not the most appropriate strategy because it was wrongly claimed that it would be an entirely separate new settlement with all its own infrastructure, including transport.

Infrastructure

A40

WODC have completely failed to show how the development would lead to the major improvements to the A40, into Oxford or to A34, which will be vital if WOGV is to be sustainable and economically viable. No company is going to be willing to invest in a new business on a Science Park, say, when the only access to Oxford and beyond is via a heavily congested 2 lane road with a single bus lane eastbound that ends at Dukes Cut.

Prospective residents of the proposed GV and the west Eynsham SDA will also be unlikely to find commuting to Oxford a sustainable option. It must be stressed that the current OCC plans for the A40 are only designed to partially address the current congestion on the road and will not be able to cope with the impact of all the development in Eynsham, Witney, Carterton etc. WODC fail to demonstrate where the funds are going to come from for new sustainable, green transport solutions let alone upgrading the A40 to dual carriageway all the way into Oxford.

Other new infrastructure and Affordable Housing

The two Eynsham SDAs are to be expected to provide 50% affordable housing as well as a lot of completely new infrastructure. We seriously doubt that given the enormous uplift in land values on both sites there will be enough money left for developers to provide both. The danger of ending up with completely unsustainable estates of houses without ready access on foot to shops, schools, medical and recreational services are very real despite all the fine words regarding GV principles etc. Car use with associated environmental damage will be the only option for residents. The strategy is therefore **ineffective** in this regard as well.

Impact on Eynsham

The location of a total of 3306 homes at Eynsham in the form of the WOGV and the west Eynsham SDA is also not **justified** as it will place intolerable strain on the infrastructure and rural setting of Eynsham itself. WODC was forced to admit at the Stage 2 Hearings that the WOGV will not be physically separate from Eynsham and will rely for some services on the

existing village. This therefore amounts to a major urban extension of Eynsham of 2200 plus homes rather than a new independent settlement.

The village currently has approx. 2200 homes. Together with the 1000 home major urban extension to the west and the existing large planning commitments for 106 homes in Eynsham, the WOGV urban extension increases the size of the settlement by 150%. No other location in the whole of West Oxfordshire is being expected to face such enormous expansion in this plan period. Inevitably services such as the medical, transport and secondary school provision will be overwhelmed. In addition, Eynsham residents will lose all of their current and much valued countryside to the north and west within easy walking distance of the centre of the village. The village and its thriving, friendly community will be altered and damaged irretrievably.

The decision to replace Hanborough, with its excellent train service to Oxford and beyond, as a Rural Service Centre, with the WOGV- which will, after all, remain a building site with no services for most of the plan period and possibly beyond- is also a baffling one and **impossible to justify**. In effect, it just places the extra burden on Eynsham.

If it must locate all of OUHN in or near Eynsham, it would have been more effective if WODC had considered locating the 450 homes for West Oxfordshire's own need elsewhere in the district to relieve the pressure on Eynsham's infrastructure and community. Carterton for example is a more affordable location, where many younger Eynsham first-time buyers already look for homes. They will be denied the chance of more affordable new homes as a result of WODC's refusal to consider greater expansion in such locations instead of West Eynsham. The very high house prices here in Eynsham put "affordable homes" out of the reach of most first-time buyers. 20% discounts off market value help very little when new houses start at well over £300,000.

Rosemary P Parrinder, Resident and former Chair of Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Steve F Parrinder, Resident and former member of Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group