

## **WOLP31 Hearing Stage 3**

### **Matter 14 - Eynsham- Woodstock Sub-Area**

#### **14.3 West Eynsham Strategic Development Area- Policy EW1b**

**The housing allocation for 1000 homes is not soundly based nor is the policy justified and effective.**

##### **Infrastructure and community services at risk**

In the light of WODC's admission that the WOGV site will not be an entirely separate settlement with all its own infrastructure we consider that the services in the community in Eynsham- particularly secondary schooling, jobs, health care and community facilities, A40 and village road congestion and lack of parking- will be severely overburdened and unable to cope with the proposed 1000 homes in the West Eynsham SDA. This will not be **soundly based** or consistent with achieving sustainable development as required by NPPF 182. It will make the SDA unsustainable in the future as residents are forced into their cars for work and essential services elsewhere.

The land values will increase to very high levels as is normal in the Eynsham area once planning is approved. Costs of acquiring the land plus the major expense of an unnecessary link road from A40 to B4449 together with other major essential infrastructure are likely to limit the amounts available for new education, health, community, strategic transport and retail provision. This will be further exacerbated by the need to provide 50% affordable housing. We fear that poor planning and cost cutting will result- to the severe detriment of new and existing residents.

##### **Reasonable Alternatives**

WODC has failed to consider the alternatives of allocating the 450 homes designed to meet WODC housing requirements elsewhere in the district to relieve some of the pressure on the village of Eynsham which is facing an 150% increase in size between now and 2031.

##### **Transport strategy**

Too much reliance has been placed on the OCC proposed improvements to the A40 which are only designed to deal with existing congestion problems. The Park and Ride and single eastbound bus lane can only remove 500 cars (out of many thousands) from the commute to and from Oxford at best and even if the bus companies had sufficient 55 seat buses to provide the anticipated 5-minute service they could only run 12 buses an hour, carrying only 660 people.

WODC have put forward no evidence to demonstrate how the transport infrastructure will be improved to take the extra traffic that this SDA, combined with the WOGV and Science Park and other developments in the district, is bound to generate. All is based on wishes and hope and no sign of where funding will come from. This is not sustainable and can only increase car use into Oxford and beyond.

**The draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (ENP)**

We strongly urge the Inspector to look closely at the alternatives, which WODC have resolutely refused to consider, put forward in the draft ENP. The plan is based on very extensive, ongoing public engagement and consultation over two and a half years and with rigorous analysis of responses. WODC cannot claim anything to compare with this in their preparation of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. ENP's evidence base is very robust and includes thorough analysis of all the implications of various development options. The plan has completed its pre-submission consultation and been submitted to WODC. It has passed an Independent "Health-check" as required by WODC with only minor alterations and is close to being ready for its formal 6-week consultation and Independent Examination. The recommended alternative options for development that it puts forward and the strong reasoning behind them deserve to be considered here.

All the documents including the ENP, the Site Assessments and the Consultation documents are available at-

<http://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/org.aspx?n=Neighbourhood-Planning&id=255>

**ENP Option W1**

We fully support the recommendation in ENP for a smaller development on the west of Eynsham keeping the new houses north of Chilbridge Road and allowing for a possible 750 new homes in addition to the 77 already permitted at the former Garden Centre (SHELAA site 181). This option places the new primary school only on the land south of Chilbridge Road and does not require the expensive and visually and environmentally damaging western link road. The savings made could be put to ensuring better provision of the infrastructure discussed above.

**Value of the land south of Chilbridge Road (a public bridleway) to the community**

This area has repeatedly been flagged up- in the ENP community engagement process- as very important to local people. Many residents use and enjoy the rural footpaths and bridleway. The fields have been left fallow for many years and are a haven for wildflowers and wildlife. Skylarks nest here and they are on the Red List of the British Trust for Ornithology. Buzzards, red kites, kestrels, owls, roe deer and foxes are regularly seen and heard. Six spot Burnett moths abound on the wildflower rich stretch of old railway line along which runs the public footpath from Chilbridge road south to the B4449 roundabout at the end of Station Road. All this biodiversity, which has developed slowly over many years, cannot be replaced on an intensively developed site. The rich natural environment of this part of the SDA is under threat of eradication if the area south of Chilbridge Road is fully developed.

The proposed 1000 home SDA would push a busy link road through this area. Not only would it take residents' cars and buses but also through traffic avoiding congestion on A40 to Oxford and commercial/HGV traffic for the southern Eynsham industrial estate. Most of the open spaces would be lost to accommodate only an extra 250 houses.

The ENP alternative Option WI avoids all this environmental damage. The loss of the countryside north of Chilbridge Road would be regrettable to the community but it has less biodiversity as it is conventionally farmed and it is well screened from the bridleway by a thick hedgerow for much of its length. Only 250 homes out of the proposed 1000 would need to be accommodated elsewhere which could be achieved through our suggestions in para 3 above and in our Hearing Statement on Matter 14.1(policy EW2).

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