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West Oxfordshire District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

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Susan Halliwell
Director for Planning & Place

26th February 2019

Dear Astrid,

Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 Submission Draft

Thank you for inviting Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to make comments on the Submission Draft Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (ENP).

Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council is supportive of the intention to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan, and of many of the aspirations of the draft plan. We previously provided comments to Eynsham Parish Council in November 2018 (updated December 2018) in response to the Regulation 14 consultation and we are pleased to see that many of those comments have been taken into account in the current draft. Some of our previous comments remain relevant and are included below.

Archaeology

The Neighbourhood Plan contains a section and policy that provides provision for the historic environment, including both designated and undesignated assets. This is considered adequate to cover archaeology, although given the importance of the historic environment a separate policy to cover this would be encouraged.

Eynsham is an important medieval town with significant buildings and surviving archaeological features. The latter includes two Scheduled Ancient Monuments; SM118, the site of Eynsham Abbey and SM 119 an extensive prehistoric settlement at Foxley Fields. There are also numerous listed buildings. There are other non-designated archaeological sites that are also potentially important and form an integral part of the development of the town and the wider parish. Should development be proposed that may result in material damage to them then appropriate mitigation will be required in line with the NPPF and Local Plan policy.

Education

We are pleased to see that comments relating to the identification of a suitable location for a school site and the timing for the availability of the school provision have been taken on board.

Note A on page 11 refers to 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' (PJF) published by the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT) in 2000. The references to this document are imprecise in places¹ and it is considered that it would be more appropriate for the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan to reference 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' as guidance to be utilised for the best outcome. This will avoid a misinterpret of 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' and give greater importance to safe routes to school.

Table 1 on page 12 defines the distance between homes and schools without taking into consideration any site constraints that may affect the possibility of locating the school centrally. Whilst acknowledging our mutual aspiration for a primary school to be in the centre of any development, without site information such as levels, ground investigations, noise surveys, ecological reports etc, a distance cannot be defined and again there should simply be reference to the guidance within 'Providing for Journeys on Foot.'

The further concern is the defining of a distance between homes and secondary school. It is unclear whether this refers to:

- new secondary school site and existing homes within Eynsham
- existing secondary school site and new homes within any development
- new secondary school site and new homes.

If the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan is referring to either of the first two bullet points, 2km may already be difficult given the current location of the secondary school and existing homes. There should only be reference to 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' which will avoid any ambiguity.

It is noted that text has been added to paragraph 1.8 stating that distances are intended as a guide to the appropriate use of land, rather than to prevent its use. However, this does not appear to be consistent with the text contained within Table 1.

The contextual note on page 25 states that 'responsibility for ensuring education provision rests with OCC.' This is not entirely accurate and should be amended to read that 'responsibility for ensuring *the sufficiency* of education provision rests with OCC.'

Public Health

We are pleased to see that some of our previous comments in relation to public health are reflected in the latest draft and support those changes, for example the inclusion of reference to healthy food in policy ENP11.

A stronger case for development that will maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of people living, working and visiting Eynsham could be made if health and wellbeing are specifically referred to within the vision and objectives section. Such an approach is supported by Chapter 8 of the revised NPPF 'Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities' and would reinforce/complement health and wellbeing objectives specified within the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan.

¹ For example, Note A states that a figure of 800m is 'commonly used as an acceptable walking distance' without giving the context. The note then goes on to state that 2000m is the maximum for commuting and walking to senior schools. The PJF document does not say this but suggests acceptable walking distances with a preferred maximum of 2000m for Commuting/School. No mention is made of the type of school.

We strongly support the aspiration that ‘development should normally be within reasonable walking distance of key facilities’, the criteria laid out within ENP8 for ‘designated paths’ to facilitate this and the recognition that ‘purposeful activity’, such as walking to school, is ‘an important factor in enhancing the health, well-being’. Rather than develop drop off points for parents using vehicles which may discourage active modes (paragraph 6.9), consideration could be given to developing safe walking and cycling corridors from nearby carparks to the school and other community amenities that could be used for ‘park and stride’ initiatives. This would help embed healthy travel behaviours from an early age and help to reduce physical inactivity, obesity, school gate air pollution and school run congestion.

We strongly support aspirations for multifunctional community facilities as set out in Policy ENP3, enhancement of the public realm referred to in Policy ENP15 and policies around connectivity as set out in ENP8. This could be strengthened by explicitly citing how these policies could help to promote social interaction - including by creating opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – which is supported by Chapter 8 of the revised NPPF.

In relation to enabling people to maintain their independence for longer we strongly support Policy ENP2 seeking high quality design for life time homes, Policies ENP8 and ENP9 that seek to enable the use and storage of mobility vehicles and Policy ENP11 to ensure that basic needs are supported by local shops without the need to travel by car. In addition to the availability of public seating set out in A13, access to suitable WCs is also an important consideration for people with reduced mobility who might not otherwise feel sufficiently confident to use public spaces.

Transport

Detailed comments on Transport Strategy are provided in Table form in Annex 1.

With regards to traffic and road safety, we are very supportive of measures to promote sustainable transport and safe walking routes, including safe crossings and design speeds for new development. We are supportive in principle, subject to funding being identified of the proposed 20mph speed limit referenced in paragraph 7.5 and the parking proposals set out in REC9. These would be subject to the statutory consultation process required for all traffic regulation / speed limit orders.

Environmental Strategy

We are pleased to see that previous comments are reflected in the current draft. There is one minor point in relation to the wording of paragraph 4.19. This could suggest that the Conservation Target Area is only as big as the Local Wildlife Site, whereas in fact it extends beyond that.

Infrastructure Delivery

The type and location and the extra care housing referred to in paragraph 1.7 will need to be agreed by Oxfordshire County Council adult joint commissioning team. Developments would be expected to provide a minimum of 60 units where indicated by OCC.

Page 45 states that ‘there is local concern that the separation is not enough, partly based on lack of trust that the infrastructure will be built as promised, leaving new residents dependent on Eynsham with its limited parking and facilities already near to capacity.’ The

focus should be on appropriate phasing of the facilities to ensure that there is capacity and services.

In relation to REC18 work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will identify infrastructure requirements for the development.

Minerals and Waste Policy

No comments on this plan.

Protected Species Officer

Previous comments have been taken into account, therefore no further comments to make on this draft.

Waste Management

The references to waste management are unchanged from the previous draft and therefore we have no additional comments. We welcome the considerations towards waste collection services in the plan. We would expect any new developments to be designed in accordance with West Oxfordshire District Council's waste planning guidance which aims to enable new residents to participate fully in waste management services, helping to maintain Oxfordshire's high performance.

Yours Sincerely,

M Hudson

Mary Hudson

Principal Planning Officer

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Annex 1 - Transport Strategy comments on Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan – February 2019

Paragraph Number	December 2018 Eynsham NP	OCC Transport Strategy Comment
ENP1 (D), p.10	Residential development should be within walking distance of key village facilities* to maintain the compact, inclusive community nature of the village. Longer distances between new housing and community facilities will only be supported when significant alternative benefits ensuring inclusion within the community can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the LPA (e.g. ENP1.8,10,11) and such homes are in character with their location. *see Note A, Note B, Table 1.	<p>This approach could inhibit WODC from delivering the scale of homes as proposed for the West Eynsham SDA in the draft LP, this could mean that the NP is not in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the LP and therefore unacceptable as per the NPPF.</p> <p>Additionally - a larger development could provide self-supporting infrastructure and not be solely reliant on existing services.</p>
ENP2 (D), p.16	Streets and public areas shall be planned and designed to be aesthetically pleasing and constructed using materials that will ensure long life and low maintenance costs. Street trees and appropriate planting are encouraged as an integral element of the design.	It is unclear as to how the term “aesthetically pleasing” may be interpreted with regard to functional elements of necessary highway infrastructure such as signage and bus stop infrastructure. Could this term be more specific perhaps and align to wording in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031?
ENP6 (C), p.25	For larger development sites where new school provision is made, access arrangements should emphasize both walking and safe pick-up and drop-off arrangements for vehicle-borne students and staff. OCC recommends that new schools be co-located with local centres as part of an integrated design.	It would be useful to make reference to provision for cyclists, including cycle parking, in this policy.
ENP7 (A), p.27	New developments shall only be accessed by motor vehicles from existing main roads (A40, B4044/4449) and not through existing village roads except as noted in 7.2. This provision shall apply to both construction and residential traffic.	<p>This policy is regarded by OCC as overly prescriptive. There may be benefit from retaining the ability for some types of vehicular access directly into the village from the west Eynsham SDA. For example, there could be a cul-de-sac development within the SDA, i.e. not one that connects with vehicular access to the rest of the strategic site area. Additionally, there could be good reason to retain the possibility of creating a vehicular link that enables emergency vehicles and/ or buses (school or service) to access the SDA directly from the village.</p> <p>Furthermore, it may be useful or necessary to allow some construction traffic to access development sites via the existing village roads in the absence of</p>

		<p>suitable alternatives. LTP4 states: “We [OCC] will also seek to minimise environmental damage from HGVs through the use of Routing Agreements, Construction Logistics Plans and Delivery and Servicing Plans, as part of the development control process.”</p> <p>These comments are also relevant to ENP17.</p>
ENP7 (B), p.27	Link Roads between main roads or connecting main roads to residential streets intended for more than 20mph use shall have pedestrian and cycle paths where appropriate and suitable noise-reduction measures to protect residents from noise pollution.	Assessment of existing noise pollution issues will be required to determine any appropriate mitigation measures.
ENP7 (C), p.27	Residential streets, those giving access to individual properties, shall be designed and constructed in accordance with best practice such as Manual for Streets or OCC guidance and to ensure a 20mph speed limit or to complement other village streets that will also have the same speed limits in force.	Further master-planning of development sites would be required to ensure the character of the streetscape is conducive to a 20mph speed limit. There may be sections of the development where higher speed limits are acceptable. A neighbourhood plan policy on the subject is considered inappropriate, but can be requested in the appendix.
ENP7 (D), p.27	Measures to utilise and improve Eynsham's existing good Public Transport shall be included in all masterplan, particularly to ensure an equally good service within a new settlement.	<p>It may not be possible or appropriate to secure a service equal to the frequency of the S1 to serve the Garden Village or West of Eynsham development sites. The frequency of the S1 largely results from the patronage derived from Witney and Oxford. Eynsham benefits from being located between these destinations. It may be unlikely that a bus service routed through the Garden Village or West of Eynsham of the same frequency would be commercially viable in the long term.</p> <p>A wider strategic view of bus services along the Witney – Eynsham – Oxford corridor will need to be taken. This will look at how these serve the Local Plan housing and employment allocations, and the existing settlements, and will be informed by the long term commercial viability of the services.</p>
ENP7 (E), p.27	Encouragement shall be given to the use of alternatives to private cars (NPPF 177) and documented in Travel Plans* submitted with each planning application where appropriate.	Travel plans: Refer to OCC comments for 14.7, p.41

	<p><i>*Travel Plans are required by OCC for new developments as set out here and here These policies are intended to inform the process of creating an Infrastructure Delivery Plan where that is appropriate.</i></p>	
7.2, p.27	<p>To prevent further congestion within the village, new developments should only connect vehicle access with existing main roads (A40, B4044, B4449 and connecting roads such as Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road). Traffic modelling as part of the AAP and SDA processes will determine the details but every effort should be made to encourage smooth traffic flow, including where appropriate, minimising the number of junctions.</p> <p>Exceptions may be justified for infill developments where no reasonable alternative exists and the main routes identified above may be reached without going through any significant part of the village.</p> <p>There are situations where access through the village is acceptable and appropriate. For example, gated access points for emergency service vehicles should be permitted. It may also be acceptable for traffic to filter into the village centre to give access for local people to services and as through routes for public transport. These access points should be designed and have weight / size limits so that they are rarely if ever used by through traffic which does not need to be within the village centre. See also ENP17A, 17.1</p>	<p>This paragraph appears to add further detail and stipulations beyond that which is included in the ENP7 policy box, which makes the scope and intention of the policy itself unclear.</p> <p>Additionally, gated access for emergency vehicles may not be an appropriate means of restricting other vehicles from using these routes. Furthermore, any route that is adopted public highway cannot be restricted to only users that are identified as 'local'. There is no national policy or legislative basis for this restriction. There could be advisory signage to discourage through traffic, but this would be difficult to enforce.</p> <p>It is also worth considering the extent to which any routes connecting from the West Eynsham SDA into the rest of Eynsham via existing residential roads would provide attractive routes for 'through traffic', when more direct and less constrained routes will be available.</p> <p>All routes in the vicinity can be designed in such a way as to make them attractive as appropriate for the overall strategy for the area. Instead of imposing restrictions that are likely to be difficult to enforce.</p> <p>The neighbourhood plan could include the recommendations for design and engineering measures that may influence route choice for through traffic, from "The Eynsham Village Centre" report produced by The Urbanists.</p>
ENP8 (A), p.29	<p>Where appropriate, new developments shall demonstrate at least one 'Designated Path' providing direct, secure, safe and 24/7 access to 'key facilities' (ENP1 D) and the village centre for pedestrians, cycles, push-chairs and mobility vehicles. These designated routes shall be constructed to standards compatible with their purpose and have provision for ongoing maintenance.</p>	<p>Using the term '24/7 access' is also somewhat ambiguous. It may be more useful to simply state that these routes should have appropriate street lighting. If this policy is also intended to ensure that these routes are open to the public at all times, it may be useful to employ more specific language to that effect.</p>

ENP8 (B), p.29	Paths within new developments or necessary to connect new developments to existing paths shall be wide enough for concurrent use by permitted wheeled equipment and pedestrians in accordance with guidance from OCC.	National design standards should also be referred to in addition to local design standards.
ENP8 (C), p.29	Paths shall be designed to provide, wherever practical , a green corridor to the open countryside and link up with existing footpaths and bridleways while not having any adverse effect on the village character.	Practical, green corridor and adverse effect . These vague terms could be misinterpreted with no defined meaning. This policy is not necessary as connectivity requirements are outlined in local and national guidance.
ENP9 (A), p.31	Development that reduces the available parking space in Eynsham village centre will not normally be permitted.	Any proposal for reallocation of highway parking capacity is a consideration for the highway authority. Proposals to reduce off-street parking capacity will be assessed on their own merits by the highway authority. If interpreted as developments adding demand on existing parking availability, this approach could inhibit WODC from delivering the scale of homes as proposed for the West Eynsham SDA in the adopted local plan. This could mean that the NP is not in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the LP and therefore unacceptable as per the NPPF.
ENP9 (B), p.31	New development shall include appropriate parking for both residents and visitors.	Consideration of parking proposals in response to planning applications is undertaken by a highway authority, which has its own guidance and so a policy of this nature is not considered to be necessary.
ENP9 (C), p.31	Safe storage for bicycles and, where appropriate, motorised mobility vehicles, shall be provided.	Clarification on what facilities would be deemed “appropriate” should be provided. Suggested wording might include safe, secure and easily accessible storage of cycles or motorised mobility vehicles.
ENP9 (D), p.31	Provision shall be made for charging of electric vehicles at each new home.	This policy appears to be inconsistent with policy ENP5 (D), which requires that there should be the capability for a charging point to be added, whereas this policy seems to imply that the charging point itself should be provided. It would be helpful to clarify this ambiguity.
ENP11 (B), p.34	New homes should have ready access to a local convenience store, without requiring the use of a private car, as set out in ENP1 D. The size of such stores should be appropriate for the area which they serve.	This could be considered to duplicate local transport plan 4 policy on reducing the need to travel Local Transport Plan 4 Policy 17:

		<p>“Oxfordshire County Council will seek to ensure through cooperation with the districts and city councils, that the location of development makes the best use of existing and planned infrastructure, provides new or improved infrastructure and reduces the need to travel and supports walking, cycling and public transport”</p> <p>This is a highway authority consideration and so a neighbourhood plan policy on the subject is considered inappropriate, but can be requested in the appendix.</p>
ENP14 (C), p.40	Make provision to mitigate Infrastructure constraints including the main access roads (A40, B4449, B4044) and the capacity of existing employment, education and health facilities.	New development cannot resolve existing issues but should mitigate new impact on main access roads. Developer not required to mitigate existing shortfalls in education and health facilities.
ENP14 (G), p.40	Mitigation of the negative impact on A40 and Toll Bridge traffic caused by both developments due to their scale.	New development cannot resolve existing issues but should mitigate new impact on main access roads. Developer not required to mitigate existing transport issues.
14.7, p.41	ENP 14C/G address road transport which is a major issue that affects the whole West Oxfordshire district. Travel Plans (NPPF 36) should be prepared to OCC guidelines and independently audited. It should make allowance for worst-case conditions when Oxford University and Schools, public and private, are in term-time operation. Travel Plans should be based on the time taken to reach a reasonable destination such as Oxford City or the A34 Trunk Route, not just the time taken to exit the village and take into account other developments allocated under the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan.	<p>OCC has its own requirements for Travel Plans, which are in line with national policy. OCC as Highway Authority has guidance on the content of Travel Plans.</p> <p>It appears that there may be some confusion about the role of Travel Plans as opposed to Transport Statements and Transport Assessments.</p>
REC14 (g), p.42	Given the serious economic impact of A40 congestion, Transport Assessments should take into account the ability of main roads to absorb traffic, not just the technical capacity of local roads.	OCC has its own requirements for Transport Statements and Assessments, which cover this topic. These are in line with national policy. OCC as Highway Authority has guidance on how Transport Assessments for developments are conducted.
16.4, p.45	Extra junctions, roundabouts or traffic lights tend to slow traffic flow on arterial routes (such as the A40 for example) whose impact may be District or County wide. ENP16C seeks to ensure the	This would preclude the necessary access arrangements for the West Eynsham SDA and the park and ride site. Extensive traffic modelling will be required to establish the highway measures to serve new

	design of new settlements minimises new junctions to prevent slowing of through traffic flow.	developments, including access arrangements that are appropriate.
ENP16 (C), p.44	Vehicular access designed to minimise delays to through traffic and existing road users.	This is a highway authority consideration and so a neighbourhood plan policy on the subject is considered inappropriate, but can be requested in the appendix.
16.6, p.45	<p>Pedestrian and cycle connections are particularly important to ensure the safety of pupils of Bartholomew School and to ensure that residents are not car-dependent to visit specialist shops, pubs and places of worship or similar 'shared' facilities.</p> <p><i>As a basic principle – it should be easier to use the designated safe crossing places than attempt to cross the carriageway elsewhere.</i></p>	<p>The Oxfordshire County Council Walking Design Guidelines and Cycling Design Guidelines could be referenced for the design of new paths or upgrades.</p> <p>Local Transport Plan 4 Policy 17 states:</p> <p>“Oxfordshire County Council will seek to ensure through cooperation with the districts and city councils, that the location of development makes the best use of existing and planned infrastructure, provides new or improved infrastructure and reduces the need to travel and supports walking, cycling and public transport”</p>
ENP17 (A), p.47	Vehicular access through the village to new developments shall be limited ENP 7.2.	Refer to OCC comments for ENP7 (A), p.27 and for 7.2, p.27
17.2, p.47	Access to developments should aim to minimise adverse impact on roads around the village. Consolidation of existing nearby junctions or other means is encouraged to minimise delays to both through and local traffic, which should be justified by traffic modelling offered in support of the masterplan.	Further master-planning of development sites accompanied by transport modelling would be required to understand the opportunities and consequences of consolidating existing junctions. Consideration of how this may potentially conflict with other aspirations such as ENP7 (A), p.27.

NB. Many of these comments have been made in previous versions of the neighbourhood plan, but they remain relevant to this latest version.