

Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) Examination

Procedural/Clarification Meeting Notes

Meeting Date and Time: Monday 4 December 2017 2pm

Meeting Venue: Bartholomew Room, The Square, Eynsham, Oxfordshire OX29 4HW

Participants

Eynsham Parish Council/Eynsham Futures representatives (EPC) – Richard Andrews, Peter Emery, Dennis Stukenbroeker

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) – Astrid Harvey, Andrew Thomson, Chris Hargraves

Purpose of meeting

The public meeting was requested by the Independent Examiner, Ann Skippers (AS) who chaired the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide more information and clarity on certain matters to gain a better understanding of the NP and to establish and agree a way forward with EPC and WODC for the examination of the NP. It was made clear that the meeting was not an opportunity to consider the merits or otherwise debate elements of the NP or to consider representations.

This is a record of the key aspects of the meeting; by their nature, some of the matters overlapped.

Agenda

- 1. To receive a short verbal update on the progress of the emerging Local Plan and likely timescales for its adoption from WODC.***

WODC explained that the emerging Local Plan had originally been submitted in July 2015, but the examination had been suspended pending housing requirement issues. It had been submitted in March 2017 with hearings held in May/June 2017. Further information had been requested and was currently being consulted upon. Interim findings were expected from the Inspector in early 2018 with the expectation that modifications would be consulted upon in January/February 2018 with a view to adopting the Local Plan in late Spring 2018.

- 2. To hear from both EPC and WODC how they have discussed and agreed the relationship between policies in the emerging ENP, the emerging Local Plan and the adopted Local Plan given that the ENP is being developed at the same time as WODC is producing its Local Plan.***

Both parties indicated that relationships between them had not always been constructive. There had been uncertainty around the emerging Local Plan, particularly in relation to housing numbers and site allocations.

- 3. To understand whether the sites referred to in the ENP namely a) the western extension to the village, b) the proposed Garden Village north of the A40, c) the Southern Industrial Area, d) Spar and the policies that refer to these sites are intended to be site allocations in the ENP i.e. in their own right regardless of the content in the emerging Local Plan or whether it was intended that the ENP would rely on and complement the proposed site allocations in the emerging Local Plan (for a) and b)).***

EPC confirmed that it had not been the intention to allocate sites, but to rely on the sites proposed in the emerging Local Plan. The ENP sought to guide and influence the development of those sites, but did not propose them as site allocations in its own right.

WODC recognised the desire of EPC to guide new development in their area. Should the Inspector accept the approach in the emerging Local Plan, then further work would be carried out on the details of proposed site allocations through an Area Action Plan (site north of the A40) and Masterplan (site to the west of Eynsham). WODC indicated opportunities would arise through these routes for EPC to contribute and WODC would prefer this rather than through the ENP whilst confirming elements of the ENP could be incorporated into Area Action Plans and Masterplans.

The Examiner explained there was no need for the NP to 'wait' until the emerging Local Plan had been adopted and that the ENP could a) allocate the sites or b) seek to influence the type of development on them through policies in the NP suggesting that WODC might wish to take its lead from the contents of the ENP for the Area Action Plan and Masterplan. However, given the relationship between the ENP and the emerging Local Plan and the respective timings of each, consideration could be given to which should be adopted first as the ENP if adopted first might be quickly out of date or even superseded by the Local Plan once adopted. Hence there was a need to ensure both were consistent.

4. To understand the intentions and 'status' of the policies, the supporting text to the policies and the recommendations in the ENP given the way in which these three elements are written and presented as well as to understand the relationship between each of these elements. By way of explanation some of the supporting text appears to include different or additional requirements than the policy it sits alongside and some of the recommendations are planning related and so could have been policies. Therefore the Examiner would like to understand the intention behind each different element (policy, text, recommendation).

Although the policies had been divided into "Policies" and "Spatial Policies", there were some options in them and also flexibility in how they might be applied. All were intended to apply to any new villages as well as the existing village of Eynsham. As a result some potentially significant changes to policy wording would be needed to remove options, clarify references to safeguarding land (as no allocations were being made), change maps, make the policies more precise and so on. It was explained that the intention was to ensure that EPC were aware of these concerns and potential modifications at an early stage to avoid surprises further down the line including the potential for losing the essence of what the ENP is about.

5. To establish what European sites and any other sites of national or local importance fall within or are near to the ENP Plan area and to see their location(s) on a map.

A series of maps were presented for discussion. It transpired that the maps required further updates so European sites in or close to the ENP area could be identified.

6. To factually check whether the overall housing figures and those for a) the western extension to the village and b) the proposed Garden Village north of the A40 quoted in the ENP in relation to those being promoted in the emerging Local Plan are the same or to understand the reasons for any differences.

EPC explained that the policy relating to the west of Eynsham showed that 600 dwellings were deliverable. WODC indicated that the emerging Local Plan allocation is for 1,000 dwellings including two sites at Eynsham Plant Centre and Thornbury Road that already have consent.

7. To factually check whether the map(s) in the ENP are accurate in particular in relation to the western extension to the village boundaries.

The extent of the boundary in the ENP was agreed as accurate and broadly consistent with the emerging Local Plan.

8. To factually establish whether any part of the proposed Barnard Gate Garden Village proposal site falls within the ENP area.

Some of the site does fall within the ENP area.

9. To find out the planning status of New Wintles Farm in terms of what this facility is and what implications, if any, there are for the ENP.

The status of New Whintles Farm was agreed as an aggregate recycling facility. It falls within the proposed Garden Village site to the north of the A40 and any implications would be addressed through the preparation of the Area Action Plan.

As the meeting drew to a close at around 4.40pm, brief comments were made about the comprehensiveness of the basic conditions statement by the examiner and EPC drew attention to a health check report which had been carried out, but not raised these issues. Three options for the way ahead were identified:

- continue with the examination
- pause the examination and review the situation
- withdraw the ENP and resubmit taking into account the issues raised.

The examination will be paused to give EPC an opportunity to consider its preferred way forward.

I am grateful to both EPC and WODC for assisting with note taking during the meeting.

Ann Skippers
27 December 2017

It should be noted that after the meeting, the Examiner wrote a letter dated 4 December 2017 to WODC and EPC and this is available separately. Another letter dated 27 December is also available separately.