

Disappointingly, neither Eynsham Parish Council nor Eynsham Futures, who are preparing the Neighbourhood Plan (NP), were involved in preparing this EOI or consulted before submission.

This is the full explanation sent to Eynsham Parish Council and others, from West Oxfordshire District Council, of the circumstances and context in which the West Oxfordshire Garden Village EOI has been prepared and made available to the public:

You may be aware that at the meeting of West Oxfordshire District Council's Cabinet on 27 July, consideration was given to the submission of an Expression of Interest for a Garden Village within the district. Whilst the Cabinet report was not specific in terms of the potential location of any such development, you may be aware that the 'general area of search' is land to the north of the A40 close to Eynsham. In the interests of openness, therefore, the Council's Cabinet members have now asked that you be provided with a copy of the actual bid document for your information and that of your Council.

You will see that the document is quite definitive in terms of its description of the site and the proposed development. This was necessary to ensure that the bid criteria were met and that the chances of success in securing the funding were maximised.

By way of context, therefore, it is important that you are advised as follows.

The Expression of Interest cannot and does not prejudice decisions that are yet to be made regarding modifications to the emerging Local Plan that will be necessary in order to meet the Inspector's requirements as set out in his preliminary findings published in December 2015. However, as a result of technical work being undertaken on behalf of the Oxfordshire Growth Board regarding Oxford City's unmet housing need, the amount of additional housing to be accommodated in West Oxfordshire specifically for this purpose is becoming clearer, and there has been a high level indication that the land to the north of the A40 close to Eynsham has the suitability and capacity to make a significant contribution. These matters are yet to be determined, and whilst the numbers to be apportioned to each of the Districts will be considered at the Growth Board meeting on 26 September, it will be for the Council, ultimately, to agree those numbers and determine where in West Oxfordshire they will be accommodated.

It is important, therefore, to bear in mind the following:

- Submitting the Expression of Interest does not commit the Council to a specific site or location at this point in time – the EOI can be withdrawn if necessary
- Submitting the Expression of Interest does ensure that West Oxfordshire does not miss out on the opportunity to tap into significant funding streams at the appropriate time
- Submitting the Expression of Interest does not impact on the proper planning decisions that yet need to be made by the Council in relation to the Local Plan and how the additional housing numbers will be accommodated once these are established
- Submitting the Expression of Interest does not supersede the need for the Council to undertake the statutory consultation on proposed modifications to the Local Plan, which we expect to be undertaking towards the end of 2016

It should also be clarified that if there is to be development in this location, it would be in the form of a new settlement which would be sustainable in its own right, and would not represent an expansion of the existing village of Eynsham or be in any way subservient to it.

Please bear in mind that the illustrations in the EOI are indicative – there is a lot of work to do yet...