

MINUTES OF EYNESHAM FUTURES STEERING GROUP MEETING HELD AT 7.30 pm ON TUESDAY 20 December 2016 IN THE BARTHOLOMEW ROOM.

Present: Richard Andrews [Chairperson] (RA), Charles Mathew (CM), Dennis Stukenbroeker (DS), Sue Chapman (SC), Jane Osborne (JO), Angie Titchen (AT), Robert Crocker (RC), Sandy Hellig (SH), Jon Bright (JB), Eleanor Chance (EC), Gordon Beach (GB), Joan Stonham (JS), Rolando Medina [minutes] RM

Apologies: Posy Parrinder (PP), Nina Turner (NT), Peter Emery

ROBERT CROCKER AND BIODIVERSITY ON GV SITE:

RC stated that he has responded to the WODC consultation and written a letter of support to both the Eynsham's NP and the Garden Village. RC requested information regarding what Eynsham's preference appeared to be in regards to a separate new development; AT informed him that the early analysis of Eynsham's latest survey responses indicate that the preference appears to be for a separate development not only in terms of infrastructure provision, but also physical (spatial) separation. In addition, RA stated that senior school will be shared with Eynsham and it may be beneficial to share some facilities as it is unrealistic to 'clone' everything in Eynsham such as the three places of worship, specialist shops and the like.

Robert considered that one way or other the development of the Garden Village was likely to happen and that the best option from a planning perspective was to gather information and prepare to attempt to protect areas of special ecosystem interest on the designated site.

AT asked RC if it was possible to obtain a site-map indicating points of special ecosystem interest and if we could use the survey findings that RC had already provided for us in our Plan; RC indicated that he was happy for us to use the findings and that he would provide the maps.

Action: RC to provide site maps indicating points that may be of special ecosystem interest to EFSG on GV North of the A40 site.

PRESS RELEASE ABOUT GV NEAR BARNARD GATE REPORT:

RA read a printed press release (not officially published yet) regarding a plan for a GV South of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham opposite Barnard Gate. The GV plan proposed a new development to meet the significant lack of affordable housing needs of West Oxfordshire council combined with the great proportion of the unmet housing needs for Oxford city.

The press release stated that the new settlement would include road improvements, schools, GP service, local shops and community building and promote access by foot or bicycle with transport already available using the A40, additionally it stated that the new settlement would create opportunities for transport improvements (A40/dual carriage way?); which otherwise would be undeliverable.

The press release also indicated that a single land owner willing to progress immediately, promoter and consultant teams were in place and that there was a potential to use the solar farm near Eynsham for energy requirements.

The release also indicated that more detail regarding this plan would be submitted as part of the WO District Council consultation process.

Action: EFSG to follow up on this plan as additional official details emerge

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of 15 Nov 2016:

Approved

MATTERS ARISING:

The Kemp&Kemp proposal has been passed

CORRESPONDENCE: Correspondence related to the Draft NP consultation will be collected together and used to update the draft ready for submission. Other correspondence is covered by other agenda items.

DS reminded the participants to provide feedback on the consultation to the A40 and Park&ride to be completed by 12th Jan 2017

Action: RA to assemble correspondence, update the plan and circulate later in the month when more feedback has been sent in.

ENP TIMETABLE AND PROGRESS:

Statutory Consultees

RA has sent out Draft 1.4 of the NP to appropriate consultees and requested advice from WODC as to any consultees that may have been missed in the circulation list but with no response up to now. The current deadline for accepting responses is 31st January 2017.

RA stated that it would be good if an updated NP version was ready for the Parish Council on the 7th of February 2017. This would place the NP in a ready state to be submitted as officially in with the inspector, submission would also be subject to the issue of community readiness to vote in the NP Referendum. RA expressed some anxiety regarding the Referendum and the possibility that the community could reject the NP.

Lack of clarity in the community about the remit of the NP

There was extensive discussion questioning the strength/clarity of some of the NP policies. Some present were unsure as to what the NP remit was and what it could and could not influence, specifically around issues related to infrastructure.

EC questioned RA if we had taken on board Peter Emery's comments on making the NP comments stronger on the policy about not taking development on the West of Eynsham if we were already taking so much on the North of the A40 of Eynsham. RA confirmed that Peter's suggestion of using 'Recommendations' to include points which are not fully in accord with WODC local Plan will be taken up in the final version of the plan along with other consultation comments

RA responded that the NP states that 3200 houses should be met by the new Garden Village North of the A40 as proposed by the WODC but that an additional 600 dwellings on the West of the village is acceptable as a "reserve site".

EC also stated that there were many areas of the NP that she did not agree with particularly the need for a Science Park. This led to a useful discussion about the remit and scope of the NP.

RA and AT summarised by saying that the Eynsham NP policies have to conform to the WODC plan . The aim of the NP was to influence rather than confront the Local Plan where there is not full agreement in areas where the LP isn't finalised., there has to be a measure of flexibility in a NP as the ultimate decisions regarding individual new developments are in the hands of WODC. Oxfordshire County Council matters such as roads are outside the NP remit so these are addressed by 'Recommendations' in the NP.

RA stated that policies cannot control some of the concerns raised by the community (e.g. A40 transport), but in response to EC's question about whether the Reasons given in the policy sections and the supporting documentation can be taken into account as part of the NP, RA confirmed that this Reasons section and other supporting text is important as it explains the policy in more detail and will be taken into account by WODC when they grant planning consent and they can be used when WODC has to defend that decision at appeal against any decision they make. Everything in the NP is relevant in this context.

JB summarised the NP remit as "we cannot reduce the number of houses allocated but we can affect how and to a degree where the development is carried out"

SC questioned the value of the NP if the NP was constrained to this extent and ignored what appeared to be the wishes (gathered from community feedback) of the Eynsham community.

DS made the point that implementation of the NP is a long term (very long) project and that a positive strategy to have some degree of control on the implementation of the building plans would be to establish a phased plan as part of the NP and attempt to agree this plan with WODC.

DS and RA both made the point that the NP must not be so specific as to limit any flexibility for WODC when considering planning consent, rather it offers broad principles as a guideline. If it is too specific then it could become an obstacle for future developments of benefit to the community. It would also make the NP 'unsound' and would be rejected by the Examiner as such.

SH and JO questioned the value of the NP if it cannot influence wider requirements like infrastructure build

that will be necessary not only for the new developments, but also the whole of West Oxfordshire and the UK (like a sustainable transport system).

The issue of the NP being voted against during the referendum as it can't include the wider policy issues was also discussed, JB and SH raised the need (as an educational process) to explain to the Eynsham community in a clear and simple way the remit of the NP and its importance. They considered that this would enhance NP acceptance, influence community participation and avoid the possibility of the community rejecting it. This was agreed and AT explained that she, NT, MM and SH had started this educational process by creating questions to post on the EF Facebook page after the holiday period.

AT, NT and SH are working on evidence which includes the wider A40 transport issues and the development site option choices as identified by the current questionnaire responses following the November 19th Eynsham Community Engagement Public Meeting. This wider evidence will be available in the consultation analysis document as supporting text but cannot be as policy in the NP as improvements to the A40 are not within the remit of the NP. Evidence pertaining to the NP remit will be used to refine the policies. AT also proposed that the wider issues should be included in the Recommendations Box at the end of each policy, so that residents could see that we have listened to them. She explained that there is already a precedence for this in the current version of the plan as it is already stated that some of the recommendations are outside the NP remit. Doing this, would show the Inspector that residents are cognisant of the wider issues that will affect the sustainability of the new developments.

DS summarised the government policy as "housing first, infrastructure somewhere", and how the local NP depends of the WODC plan and how the WODC plan depends on the Oxfordshire County Council who are the entity ultimately responsible for infrastructure budgeting for transport and to a degree for schools.

Action: Discuss if the suggestion of DS for a phased NP should be included in the NP document (i.e. what gets built first etc) **When:** next EFSG meeting.

Action: Discuss and agree on the strength of policy statement (in the NP) regarding West and North developments. **When:** next EFSG meeting

Action: Discuss the value of JB and SH proposal for the need for a simple and clear explanation of (1) what is the remit of the NP policies (i.e. what it can influence and what it cannot) (2) the importance of the NP supporting text and finally (3) the importance of the NP Referendum (i.e. what are the implication if the community votes against it) **When:** next EFSG meeting

Action: The issues of lack of control on infrastructure build versus house requirements were hotly debated. These issues may need further discussion by EFSG and clear communication to the community before the Referendum **When:** ?

Facebook Project

AT discussed work that she is planning with NT, MM and SH to raise the profile of the EF Facebook presence.

ENP workshop meeting feedback Most of the issues raised at the workshop had been touched on in the preceding discussion. The detailed feedback of recent meetings is currently being written up and will be available about the time of the next meeting

Local Green Space

PP has been working on this document and has suggested that its content should go in the main body of the NP. RA considers that it would be better to keep the two documents separate. DS and JB agreed that in main body of the NP "less is more". AT emphasised that the essence of Reasons underpinning the Local Green Space document should be presented in the Local Green Space policy pages (there is space!) and linked to the full document in the supporting material.

Action: RA to consult with PP

When: Before next EFSG meeting.

WODC DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

It was reported that the deadline for responses to the WODC Local Plan was December 23rd 2016.

It was considered that at the public meeting of the 19th December 2016, Eynsham residents questioned the

Chairs of WODC and OCC very effectively, offering informed challenges, pointing out flaws in both Local Plan and A40 proposals and offering visionary, joined up ways forward.

In terms of follow up activities GB and RA attended another meeting at WODC with James Mills and Giles Hughes RA stated that the meeting was poorly attended and that WODC showed reluctance to change their plan.

RA had recommended that there should be a single Strategic Development Area with a single Masterplan addressing the North and West developments.

Eynsham NP line regarding North and West developments is that the WODC has no reserve site in their plans and if their plan for the North proves not feasible then the whole plan may fail as currently proposed. So Eynsham NP assumes that if both North and West sites would eventually be developed as assumed by WODC then it is better to create an integrated and managed development plan where the Northern site would be developed first (3200 houses) and that the West site should be allocated in reserve for 600 houses; this includes 160 houses off Thornbury Road. This main concern is to preserve the South of Chilbridge Road from development.

Some participants to the meeting considered that DS's proposed strategy (already discussed) of having some form of phasing to the new developments included in the NP should be considered. RA considered that this may complicate things and that the policy statements to develop North first and West later was enough.

There was some further discussion about the North of A40 and West new development policies with the result that RA stated that he would go away and think if phasing and preserving the West could be done and how. One suggestion was to include statements to support the ideas within the "Recommendations" section of those policies.

Action: RA to think and report back about (1) DS idea of providing a phasing strategy to the NP and (2) suggestion from Peter Emery's to strengthen the case to support the village's desire for new development to be absorbed by the North of the A40 GV **When:** By next EFSG meeting.